# CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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WEF - DAVOS

# Want immediate negotiations to acquire Greenland: Trump

Trump also said for the first time that he would not use military force in pursuit of the territory

**DAVOS (SWITZERLAND)**

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday called for immediate negotiations toward a deal to acquire Greenland, adding that he would not use force in his campaign for the northern island.

"I'm seeking immediate negotiations to once again to discuss the acquisition of Greenland by the United States," he told world leaders gathered in Davos, Switzerland.

Trump said only the US was capable of securing Greenland and the urgent need for negotiations had nothing to do with rare earths.

'We were stupid to give back Greenland'

Greenland, which has driven a rift between the US and the European Union, Trump called the country a "big, beautiful piece of ice". Reiterating that no one other than the US could defend Greenland, he said the country was "stupid" to give it back to Denmark after World War II, only to get ingratitude in return.

## 'Europe not headed in right direction'

Europe is not headed in the right direction, Trump said at the World Economic Forum, in a direct attack on a continent that has historically shared a close alliance with the US superpower. He proclaimed America as an "economic engine on the planet." Slamming Europe, he said parts of the continent were "not recognizable." "The USA is the economic engine on the planet. And when America booms, the entire world booms. It's been the history," he said at Davos, adding, "I love Europe, and I want to see Europe go good, but it's not heading in the right direction."

## 'Settled 8 wars, including India-Pak'

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday repeated his claim of solving eight international wars, including India-Pakistan conflict last year, during his one year of presidency. The US President made the remark in an address at World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. "I am now working on this war for one year during which time I settled eight other wars, (including) India-Pakistan. I have settled other wars that were. Vladimir Putin called me... Armenia-Azerbaijan. He said that I can't believe you settled that. They were going on for 35 years," he said.

## 'Will wipe Iran off the face of earth'

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday reiterated that Iran would be wiped "off the face of this earth" if any attempt was made to assassinate him, issuing one of his strongest warnings yet amid rising tensions between Washington and Tehran. Trump, as per reports, said he had given what he described as "very firm instructions" to his advisers. "If anything happens, they're going to wipe them off the face of this earth," he said, adding that the entire country would be "blown up" in the event of such an attack.

## Sify Tech set to launch, Bharti keen to set up data centres in K'taka: MB Patil

**DAVOS**

While Sify Technologies, an Indian ICT company, is set to inaugurate a new data centre facility in Karnataka shortly, Bharti Enterprises has expressed interest in setting up a data centre in the state, Large and Medium Industries Minister MB Patil has announced.

During the World Economic Forum in Davos, the state delegation comprising Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Minister MB Patil held a series of high-level meetings with global corporations, technology firms and academic institutions, highlighting Karnataka's execution capability, strong talent base and investor-friendly ecosystem.

Sify Technologies highlighted Karnataka's central role in its growth journey. The company has made significant investments in data centres in Bengaluru and is set to inaugurate a new facility shortly. Discussions also covered the possibility of developing data centres in Tier-2 cities across Karnataka to promote balanced regional growth, leveraging improved connectivity, power availability and infrastructure.

Rajan Bharti Mittal, VC of Bharti Enterprises, noted the diversified Indian conglomerate has already made cumulative investments of around ₹13,000 crore in the state. He expressed interest in setting up a data centre in the state, discussions centred on land availability, water requirements and supporting infrastructure.

## Space legend Sunita Williams signs off

**New Delhi:** NASA aastronaut Sunita Williams, one of the most accomplished figures in modern human spaceflight, has retired from the space agency, capping a stellar 27-year career. With a remarkable career spanning three missions to the International Space Station, Williams (60) set several records for human spaceflight, including spending 608 days in space, the second most by a NASA astronaut.

**Early career & military (1987-1998)**

**1987:** Commissioned as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy after graduating from the Naval Academy.

**1989:** Designated a Naval Aviator, flying H-46 Sea Knight helicopters.

**1990s:** Deployed for operations like Desert Shield and provided relief during Hurricane Andrew.

**1993:** Attended the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School.

**1995:** Earned a Master's in Engineering Management.

**NASA Astronaut (1998-2026)**

**1998:** Selected as a NASA astronaut candidate.

**2001 (STS-108):** First spaceflight.

**2006-2007 (Expeditions 14 & 15):** Longest single spaceflight for a woman (195 days), performed spacewalks, became first person to run a marathon in space (2007).

**2012 (Expeditions 32 & 33):** Served as Flight Engineer and ISS Commander, completed a triathlon in space, set new female spacewalk records.

**2024-2025 (Boeing Crew Flight Test):** Flew on Starliner's first crewed mission, extended stay on ISS due to technical issues, returned via SpaceX Dragon, setting new record for cumulative spacewalks by a woman (over 62 hours).

**Key achievements & records**

Most cumulative spacewalk time by a woman (62 hours, 9 mins).

Longest single spaceflight for a woman (195 days).

First person to run a marathon and a triathlon in space.

ISS Commander.

More on page 8

**Retirement (2026)**

Retired from NASA in January 2026 after 27 years, culminating a distinguished career in aviation and spaceflight.

"Anyone who knows me knows that space is my absolute favourite place to be." —Sunita Williams

# Cong, BJP–JD(S) brace for stormy legislature session

**BENGALURU**

The joint session of the Karnataka legislature, which will begin on Thursday, is expected to be stormy, with confrontation anticipated between the ruling Congress and the opposition BJP-JD (S) combine on a host of issues, including the "repeal" of the MGNREGA by the Centre.

The session from 22 to 31 January will begin with Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's customary address to the joint sitting of the legislature on Thursday.

Confrontation is expected between the treasury and opposition benches as the ruling Congress is planning to pass a resolution against the BJP-led NDA government at the centre for repealing the UPA era MGNREGA, and demand for its restoration by scrapping the new Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin).

The state government's move coincides with the Congress's nationwide campaign "Save MGNREGA".

The Karnataka cabinet has decided not to accept the recently enacted VB-G RAM G Act, replacing the MGNREGA, and to take up a legal battle against it.

The opposition BJP too is preparing to counter the ruling Congress's "misinformation campaign" by seeking to highlight that the VB-G RAM G Act revamps MGNREGA, aimed at strengthening rural employment and livelihood. The opposition party is also likely to point out reports about alleged misappropriation of funds under the erstwhile legislation.

BJP President BY Vijayendra had recently accused CM Siddaramaiah of using the legislature session to save his chair, along with spreading false propaganda against the central government's programmes.

### Guv refuses to address joint session

Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot Wednesday refused to address the joint session of the state legislature scheduled to be held from January 22, official sources said on Wednesday. A high-level delegation led by Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil rushed to the Lok Bhavan (previously Raj Bhavan) to meet the Governor in this regard. "In the wake of the Governor's refusal to address the joint session tomorrow, a high-level delegation led by the Law Minister will leave for Raj Bhavan (Lok Bhavan) at 5.45 pm today," stated in a release.

## Months after Gen Z stir, 4 ex-PMs enter poll race

**KATHMANDU**

Several months after Nepal witnessed Gen Z–led protests demanding political change, four four former prime ministers have entered the electoral fray by filing nominations from different constituencies for the general eletions scheduled for March 5.

Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) chair and deposed prime minister K P Sharma Oli, is contesting from Jhapa-5 while former Prime Minister Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) has filed nomination from Rukum East.

Two other former PMs --Madhav Kumar Nepal of Nepali Communist Party and Baburam Bhattarai of Pragatisheel Lokatantrik Party -- have filed nominations from Rautahat-1 and Gorkha-2 constituencies respectively.

However, another two former prime ministers --Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba and senior leader of Nepali Communist Party Jhala Nath Khanal -- are not in the race.

## 'No appeal filed after purification of electoral rolls'

**NEW DELHI**

Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Wednesday showcased the Special Intensive Revision and subsequent election in Bihar to highlight India's robust electoral system before international poll management bodies, saying no appeal was filed after the "purification of the electoral rolls" and no repolls were required after the voting.

Inaugurating the India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management 2026, he said the Booth Level Officer (BLO), the ground-level functionary who helps in preparing electoral rolls, is the foundational pillar of electoral democracy in the country. His comments on the Bihar SIR came amid the opposition questioning the exercise.

**QUICK READ**

### Dhinakaran-led AMMK returns to NDA fold

**CHENNAI:** Months after walking out of the NDA, TTV Dhinakaran-led AMMK on Wednesday returned to the AIADMK-led bloc in Tamil Nadu. Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) founder-leader Dhinakaran met senior BJP leader and Union Minister Piyush Goyal and was formally re-inducted into the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami welcomed Dhinakaran.

**FIRECRACKERS RELIEVED!**

## 'Vehicular pollution top contributor to Delhi-NCR smog'

**NEW DELHI**

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) told the Supreme Court on Wednesday that vehicular pollution is the highest contributor to air pollution in Delhi-NCR and recommended 15 long-term measures to improve the worsening Air Quality Index (AQI).

Appearing for CAQM, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati told a bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi that a meta-analysis of studies from 2015 to 2025 attributes PM2.5 in Delhi to a mix of primary emissions and secondary particulate formation from sources within the National Capital Region (NCR).

**CAQM recommends measures to be introduced in a phased manner:**

- Time-bound phasing out of polluting vehicles from Delhi-NCR based on emission potential.
- Strengthening of PUC 2.0 and monitoring of on-road vehicles with remote sensing devices.
- Augmenting Regional Rail Transport and Metro Rail network with more lines and stations in Delhi and NCR.

- Developing Multi-Modal Transport hubs connecting Metro, Regional Rapid Transit System.
- Ensuring last-mile connectivity along with a real-time passenger information system with location-based tracking of public transport.
- Reviewing and revising respective electric vehicle policies to accelerate the transition of all vehicles to zero tailpipe emission vehicles in Delhi-NCR. Giving higher incentives to owners for scrapping their old vehicles.
- Expanding EV charging infrastructure including swappable battery stations expeditiously commensurate with vehicle growth.
- Permitting retrofitting of vehicles to EV certification by ARAI/ICAT.
- Augmenting city public bus service through E-buses/ CNG according to model yardsticks and service level benchmark of Ministry of Housing and Urban Administration (MoHUA) based on population.
- Developing a plan for CNG/ LNG fuelling network in NCR and on highways to shift long-haul trucking and other commercial vehicles to gas.
- Installing ANPR cameras and automated RFID ensuring Multi-Lane Free Flow enabled Toll/ Cess collection at all border entry points of Delhi.
- Deploying integrated traffic management system in Delhi and other major urban agglomerates, particularly Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Gurugram, Faridabad and Sonipat for smooth and improved traffic movement.

## QUICK READ

### Republic Day celebrations planned by district administration

**Chikkamagaluru**

The district administration will celebrate Republic Day at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose District Stadium, where Energy and District In-charge Minister K.J. George will hoist the national flag. Several ministers, MPs, MLAs and MLCs will attend, while cultural programmes will be held in the evening at Kuvempu Kalamandira. Separately, the city municipality will hold its own Republic Day programme with the municipal president hoisting the flag at the municipal office premises.

### Fee reimbursement scheme for SC sports students

**Chikkamagaluru**

Applications have been invited from Scheduled Caste students undergoing training at the National Institute of Sports under certificate, postgraduate diploma and MSc sports coaching courses for reimbursement of educational fees under the Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan. Eligible students have been asked to apply at the Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports office within the stipulated period.

### 48.76 Grams of Ganja Seized from Auto-Rickshaw

**Kasaragod**

Police attached to the Meleparamba station in Kasaragod district seized 48.76 grams of ganja from an auto-rickshaw during a vehicle inspection on the national highway near Thekkil bridge. Officers were conducting routine checks on the stretch when they signalled the approaching auto-rickshaw to stop. Upon thorough search of the vehicle and the persons inside, the contraband was recovered. The individuals involved have been identified as T. Sakariya (20), driver of the auto-rickshaw, resident of Kushalnagar in Hosadurg, Muhammad Mirshan (33) from Avikkara, and Muhammad Nasruddin (26) from Madian.

### Woman Alleges Assault and Death Threats by Husband

**Kundapura**

A 33-year-old woman has lodged a complaint at the Kundapura police station accusing her husband of sustained physical assault and issuing death threats. The complainant is Jansin Pinto, wife of Jimmy Pinto, residing near the Anagalli Gram Panchayat office.

According to the complaint, the couple enjoyed a peaceful marriage for the first four years. However, the husband subsequently began picking fights frequently.

In 2024, over a minor issue, he allegedly assaulted her and took all her gold jewellery to pledge it at a bank in order to secure a loan, which he later failed to repay. The situation escalated further when Jansin reportedly learned of her husband's involvement with another woman. Upon checking his mobile phone and confronting him about it, he allegedly beat her severely, ordered her to leave the house, and threatened her life. A case has been registered based on the complaint, and police are investigating the allegations of domestic violence, criminal intimidation, and related offences.

# Minister Accuses Centre of Undermining Panchayat Authority Through Scheme Overhaul

**MADIKERI**

State authorities have voiced strong criticism against the national administration for unilaterally altering a key rural employment initiative without seeking input from regional governments, effectively diminishing the role of village councils.

During a media briefing held in the city, Kodagu district incharge minister N.S. Boseraju charged that the federal leadership has acted dictatorially by converting the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) into the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) program. This move, he argued, has directly eroded the autonomy previously held by gram panchayats in executing projects.

The original program offered vital employment opportunities to impoverished communities nationwide, serving as a lifeline for countless underprivileged families. Yet, the transformation occurred in a rushed manner over just 72 hours, bypassing consultations with any associations, elected officials, or provincial administrations, which drew sharp disapproval from the minister.

The Congress party plans to launch nationwide campaigns to raise public consciousness and stage demonstrations until the revised initiative is revoked. To deliberate on this issue, the provincial administration has convened a dedicated seven-day legislative gathering.

"MGNREGA was the economic strength of the country's poor. It was a boon to the lives of wage laborers. Even though the Congress party implemented such a people-centric scheme, out of fear that this scheme fulfills Gandhiji's vision of Swaraj, the Central government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set out to uproot the MGNREGA scheme itself. This is condemnable," he stated.

He further said, "The credit for providing employment guarantee, education, right to information, and food security through MGNREGA belongs to our Congress party. With malicious intent to deny this credit, it is snatching away the scheme that was aiding the country's poor and their rights. A call was given that we all must unite and fight against this," he added.

While the ruling BJP at the centre justifies the shift as a measure to combat irregularities, the minister countered that every department faces such challenges, and the proper approach involves addressing flaws rather than overhauling the entire structure.

For the fiscal year 2025-26 in Kodagu district, progress under the original employment scheme stands at 68.49 percent. Female participation has been notably strong, accounting for 49.22 percent of total person-days generated. Additionally, 62.04 percent of the allocated resources have been directed toward farming and related endeavors, as detailed by the minister.

Speaking alongside, the chief minister's legal counsel and legislator A.S. Ponnanna remarked that this revision contradicts the principles of cooperative federalism by forcing states to bear 40 percent of costs, in clear defiance of established protocols. He lambasted the BJP for consistently opposing the nation's federal structure, branding them as adversaries of democratic values.

# Workshop Focuses on Compassionate Care for Children in Protection Units

**UDUPI**

Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights is rolling out comprehensive training programmes throughout the state to equip officers and staff working in child protection units with updated knowledge and refined skills to respond effectively to contemporary challenges.

Speaking after inaugurating an awareness programme at the Rajathadri District Resource Centre in Udupi, commission member Dr. Tippeswamy K.T. stressed that the knowledge gained during these sessions must be deeply internalised. Participants should elevate their professional skills and approach children with genuine sensitivity and empathy.

The event was jointly organised by the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (Bengaluru), the Department of Women and Child Development, the District Child Protection Unit, and Childline Udupi district. It targeted officers and staff from child care institutions.

The state government, taking child rights protection seriously, has scheduled such training in all 5,970 gram panchayats across Karnataka. Training has already been completed in 26 districts. In every district, direct conversations have been held with children to listen to their problems and grievances.

Dr. Tippeswamy underlined that those working in child care centres—whether government officials, staff, or NGO workers—should not view their role merely through a legal lens. Instead, they must become beacons of hope in the children's lives, shaping care and rehabilitation processes with compassion.

Such training initiatives provide clear guidance in this direction. He called for a fundamental shift in mindset when dealing with children's issues and recommended regular reading of psychological literature on child development to foster attitudinal change. He encouraged everyone to cultivate the habit of reading relevant books.

Halima, Project Director from the Directorate of Child Protection in Bengaluru, addressed the gathering and emphasised that staff in child care institutions must have accurate knowledge of juvenile justice laws. Complaints and reports concerning children should be written with utmost clarity.

She urged participants never to treat any child who comes into their care with indifference or as "someone else's"; instead, they should extend the same affection and concern they would show if the child were their own. She advised making full use of the training and applying the learnings consistently in daily practice.

The programme was attended by DYSP Prabhu D.T., Deputy Director of Women and Child Development Anuradha Hadimani, Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee Juhi Damodar, Bhanumathi from the District Legal Services Authority, Nagarathna from the District Child Protection Unit, and several other dignitaries and participants.

# KSRTC Bus Fares Hiked on Routes Passing Kumbla Arikkady Toll Plaza

**KASARAGOD**

Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has reportedly revised passenger fares upward for all its bus services that pass through the newly established toll plaza at Arikkady near Kumbla on National Highway 66, effective Tuesday.

The fare increase includes, Ordinary (Sarige) buses at ₹7 extra per ticket, Rajahamsa services at ₹11 extra per ticket, and Multi-axle Volvo buses operating up to Ernakulam at ₹14 extra per ticket.

Passengers alighting before reaching the Arikkady toll point will continue to pay the old fare. There are currently around 35 KSRTC buses operating daily between Mangaluru and Kasaragod, covering more than 200 trips. The new toll is imposing an additional daily expense of approximately ₹50,000 on the corporation, prompting the fare adjustment to offset the cost.

The Arikkady toll plaza has been a point of contention, with recent protests causing damage to the toll gates and some equipment. Although toll collection staff are not currently stationed at the plaza, the FASTag sensors installed there automatically deduct the applicable amount in most cases.

# Labourer Killed by Falling Log While Unloading truck

**KASARAGOD**

A fatal workplace accident occurred late on the night of January 19 in the Mookampare area of Badiyadka, resulting in the death of a young migrant labourer.

The deceased has been identified as Ali Akbar (32), son of Chamath Ali from Jogikop in Assam. He was working as a hotel staff member in Badiyadka.

According to reports, the incident took place around midnight while a truck was unloading logs on the roadside. Ali Akbar approached the spot carrying a torch, apparently to provide light for the unloading process.

The truck driver or workers reportedly asked him to move away for safety. Due to the language barrier—he did not understand the warning—he remained in the vicinity.At that moment, a large log slipped or fell directly onto him, causing severe injuries to his body.

He was immediately taken to a hospital in Cherkala for emergency treatment, but doctors could not save his life.

The body has been preserved at the mortuary of Kasaragod General Hospital for post-mortem examination and further procedures. Police have registered the case as an accidental death during loading/unloading operations.

# Political Row Erupts in Karnataka Over Udupi DC's Role in Traditional Paryaya Flag Ceremony

**UDUPI**

A traditional religious event has sparked sharp political exchanges, with the Congress party calling for disciplinary measures against Udupi Deputy Commissioner T.K. Swaroopa after she waved the saffron flag to inaugurate the Paryaya procession at the Sri Krishna Matha on January 18.

The biennial Paryaya Mahotsava marks the rotational handover of temple administration among the eight mutts, and the flag-hoisting is a customary part of the ceremonial launch, typically led by the district in-charge minister or a designated official in their absence.

The Udupi District Congress's Legal and Human Rights Unit lodged a complaint with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, and the Chief Secretary, alleging that displaying the flag—described by some as an RSS symbol—violated administrative neutrality and service rules.

In response, BJP leaders have strongly criticized the move as an example of the party's alleged bias against Hindu customs, insisting the saffron flag is a revered cultural and religious emblem of sacrifice and heritage, not a partisan marker.

Prominent voices condemning the Congress demand include Dakshina Kannada MP Captain Brijesh Chowta, Karkala MLA V. Sunil Kumar, senior leader C.T. Ravi, and Udupi MLA Yashpal Anand Suvarna. The BJP Karnataka unit has also weighed in, accusing the ruling party of obstructing Hindu practices while showing leniency elsewhere.

In a press release, Deputy Commissioner T.K. Swaroopa clarified that her involvement was strictly in her official capacity as administrator of the Udupi City Municipal Council. She stated that at 3:00 AM on January 18, she flagged off the Swamiji's Pura Pravesha (town entry) procession as part of the event's protocol, and later extended civic honors to the new ascetics before attending the Darbar following their ascension to the Sarvajna Peetha.

Swaroopa emphasized that there was no political motivation behind her participation, describing it as a routine administrative duty tied to the festival's significance in the district.This statement seeks to defuse the controversy by reaffirming her adherence to neutrality and protocol, while highlighting her successful oversight of the large-scale event attended by lakhs of devotees in her short tenure.

No government decision on the matter has been announced as of Wednesday, January 21, 2026.

# Doctor Arrested for Poisoning Elderly Uncle and Aunt

**SHIVAMOGGA**

Bhadravati Old Town police cracked a mysterious double death case within just 24 hours, arresting a doctor who turned out to be the prime accused in the murders of his elderly uncle and aunt.

The victims, Chandrappa and Jayamma, a senior couple residing in Bhootanagudi area of Bhadravati town, were found dead in their beds on January 19 under suspicious circumstances. Although they appeared to have died while sleeping, their jewellery was missing, prompting the registration of a complaint at the Old Town police station.

The couple lived separately from their three sons, but the children maintained daily phone contact to check on their parents' health. On January 19, repeated calls went unanswered. After alerting a sibling, who also failed to get a response, they requested a neighbour to check.

The neighbour found the door unlocked, entered, and discovered both elderly persons lying separately on their beds. Foam was noticed coming from Chandrappa's mouth. The neighbour immediately informed the sons, who rushed to the house and shifted the couple to hospital, but they were already deceased.

The absence of jewellery raised strong suspicion of foul play rather than natural death, leading police to treat it as an unnatural case and launch a detailed probe.During questioning, suspicion quickly fell on Dr. Mallesh, son of Chandrappa's younger brother. He was a practising doctor at a reputed private hospital in Shivamogga.

Investigators learned he had accumulated massive debts from gambling and had borrowed heavily from various people. Recently, he had approached his uncle Chandrappa seeking a loan of ₹15 lakh, which was refused on the grounds that no money was available.

A few days prior, Dr. Mallesh visited the elderly couple again, claiming concern for their health. He asked for their old medical reports, citing knee and leg pain, and offered to provide treatment. Under this pretext, he administered Propofol—an anaesthetic typically used in small 5 mg doses during surgery—giving each victim around 50 mg. Within moments, both lost consciousness.

He then placed them on their beds, looted the Mangalsutra and bangles from Jayamma, the chain from Chandrappa's neck, and other gold ornaments from the house, before fleeing. The stolen jewellery was pledged to settle some debts, with a portion retained in his account.

The sons grew suspicious when Dr. Mallesh did not even visit to see the bodies after hearing of the deaths. They shared their doubts with police, highlighting the injection marks on both parents' hands and the missing gold (estimated at around half a kilogram).

When confronted, Dr. Mallesh confessed to the crime. Police confirmed the use of Propofol as the cause of death through initial findings.

# Vivekananda Yuvaka Sangha Seeks Protection for Farmer Harish Achar's Family

**CHIKKAMAGALURU:**

The Vivekananda Yuvaka Sangha has demanded immediate and adequate protection for the family of farmer Harish Achar, a resident of Sattihalli village in Aldur hobli, alleging sustained harassment, physical assault and official apathy in a long-standing land access dispute.

According to the organisation, Harish Achar owns 33 guntas (about 1 acre) of agricultural land in Survey No. 5/2 of Sattihalli village and has been cultivating it for the past 30 years. Though there is a road marked in official records providing access to his land, he has allegedly been prevented from using it and was subjected to a murderous assault when he attempted to do so.

In a press statement, leaders of the Sangha alleged that Sadashiva, Girish, Geetha and Omkaramma, all residents of the same village, have been mentally harassing and intimidating Harish Achar. A complaint was reportedly registered at the Aldur police station, but the police have been negligent in acting on the case, the Sangha alleged.

They further stated that on January 6, the tahsildar of the taluk conducted a spot inspection and confirmed that the access road exists as per the village map. Despite this, no effective action has been taken so far, which the organisation described as highly condemnable. Addressing the issue, Vivekananda Yuvaka Sangha president Raju R. said that land, village roads and water bodies are increasingly being encroached upon by organised mafias, while officials remain mute spectators, failing in their duty.

## QUICK READ

### Five-Year Jail Term in POCSO Case

**Puttur**

A Puttur court has sentenced Selvakumar, accused in a POCSO case registered at Bellare police station (Crime No. 42/2020), to five years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹20,000. The verdict was delivered by the V Additional District and Sessions Court, Mangaluru (sitting at Puttur), presided over by Judge Sarita D. Failure to pay the fine will attract an additional six months' imprisonment. The case was investigated by then Bellare police inspector Anjaneya Reddy, while public prosecutor Pushparaj represented the State.

### Absconding Cheating Accused Arrested After 10 Years

**Belthangady**

Belthangady police have arrested an accused who had been absconding for nearly a decade in a cheating case registered in 2009. The accused, S. N. Chandregowda of Channarayapatna in Hassan district, was wanted in Crime No. 60/2009 under Section 420 IPC for allegedly cheating people by collecting money on the promise of providing biogas connections. He was traced and arrested at Belagihalli in Channarayapatna and produced before the court on January 20, 2026.

### Meditation Maha Yajna Begins at Dharmasthala

**Ujire**

A four-day "Dhyana Maha Yajna" will be held at the Amrutavarshini Sabha Bhavan in Dharmasthala from January 22 to 25 under the leadership of Bengaluru-based Vishwa Chaitanya Quantum Foundation. Organisers said the programme will be conducted with the theme "From Meditation to Knowledge, from Knowledge to Liberation." Daily seven-hour meditation sessions accompanied by music will be held with the blessings of Patriji. Senior meditators and spiritual guides will offer talks and guidance, along with cultural programmes each day. Dharmasthala's Hemavathi V. Heggade will inaugurate the event, while the valedictory on January 25 will be held under the presidency of Dharmadhikari D. Veerendra Heggade.

### Ambigara Choudayya's life values inspire society

**Mangaluru**

Ambigara Choudayya Jayanti was observed at Urwa Sri Mariyamma Sabha Bhavan, where Deputy Commissioner Darshan H.V. said Choudayya symbolised hard work, self-respect and social equality, and his ideals continue to guide present-day society. Speakers recalled his social reform efforts and contributions to community development.

# MP Seeks Urgent Interim Fix for Pandeshwar Level Crossing Woes

**MANGALURU**

Member of Parliament Capt. Brijesh Chowta has directed railway authorities to take immediate temporary measures to ease severe traffic congestion at the Pandeshwar level crossing, a chronic problem affecting daily commuters in the city.

Speaking at a meeting on railway-related issues in Mangaluru, held at the Deputy Commissioner's office and attended by public representatives, officials and citizens, the MP said frequent movement of goods trains and empty passenger trains between Mangaluru Central and the Bandar Goods Shed has resulted in repeated closure of the railway gate, forcing the public to wait for long durations.

Capt. Chowta pointed out that the gate is shut several times a day, causing traffic pile-ups and inconvenience to commuters. As an immediate step, he instructed railway officials to install LED display boards near the level crossing indicating train movement timings, enabling motorists to plan alternate routes. He also suggested regulating train movements during peak office hours to reduce disruption.

Stressing that the issue has persisted for several years, the MP said there was a need for a permanent solution. He called upon the Mangaluru City Corporation and the Railways to jointly prepare a comprehensive report and place it before senior railway authorities to arrive at a long-term remedy.

MLA Vedavyas Kamath said 10 to 15 goods and empty passenger trains pass through the Pandeshwar level crossing daily, with each closure resulting in traffic jams lasting 15 to 20 minutes. He said students, office-goers, ambulances and other emergency service vehicles are badly affected, especially during morning and evening peak hours. Local residents, he added, have repeatedly raised complaints over the issue.

Deputy Commissioner Darshan H.V. suggested that displaying train arrival timings on large screens in surrounding areas would help commuters take alternative routes in advance. He directed railway officials to act in this regard.

The meeting also discussed similar traffic problems near the Hoigebazar level crossing, with deliberations on shifting the yard to an alternative suitable location.

Corporation Commissioner Ravichandra Naik, former mayors Divakar Pandeshwar and Premananda Shetty, senior engineer Naresh Shenai and other officials and citizens were present.

# "People Won't Respect Leaders Who Break Promises," Says MLA Ashok Rai at Panaje Meet

**PUTTUR**

Stating that public representatives lose the respect of the people if they fail to keep promises made during elections, Puttur MLA Ashok Rai said fulfilling commitments was the true measure of political integrity.

He was speaking after inaugurating a taluk-level Akrama-Sakrama (regularisation of unauthorised holdings) meeting and distribution of title deeds at the Panaje Seva Co-operative Society auditorium on Sunday.

Ashok Rai said political parties and candidates often make several assurances during elections but forget them once polls are over. "If promises are not honoured, people will not respect their representatives," he said. Referring to the Congress government's five guarantees, he said all were implemented within three months of coming to power. "I, too, gave five assurances to the people of my constituency. Four have already been fulfilled and the fifth is under progress," he added.

The MLA said major development initiatives had been taken up in Puttur, including establishment of a medical college, development of temples, Akrama-Sakrama implementation, distribution of rights under Sections 94C and 94CC, allocation of sites to the houseless and construction of a taluk stadium. He expressed confidence that the public had acknowledged these efforts.

Ashok Rai announced that nearly 30,000 jobs would be created in Puttur over the next three years. He said around 8,000 jobs would be generated through the medical college, 7,000 through KMF, and several more through proposed Ayurveda, physiotherapy and veterinary colleges, along with the RTO track and other institutions.

Criticising earlier practices, he said land regularisation had largely benefited the affluent, while files related to the poor remained buried in offices. "I have put an end to that system. Meetings that once happened secretly are now held openly in villages, and they will continue," he said, assuring that title deeds for residential land would be provided.

Ashok Rai also warned officials to be responsive, especially towards the poor. "Officers who fail to work for people have no place here," he said.

Akrama-Sakrama committee member Mohammed Badagannur, Tahsildar Kudligi and several local representatives were present.

# Mahakalipadpu Underpass in Mangaluru to Be Inaugurated on Jan 25

**MANGALURU**

The long-awaited Mahakalipadpu underpass road in Mangaluru city will be inaugurated on January 25, 2026, marking a major boost to urban connectivity and easing traffic flow at one of the city's key entry points. The inauguration will be jointly conducted by Dakshina Kannada District In-charge Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao and Urban Development Minister B.S. Suresh, according to former MLC Ivan D'Souza.

Built by the Mangaluru City Corporation under the Smart City project, the underbridge at Mahakalipadpu is a crucial infrastructure upgrade for traffic entering Mangaluru from Kerala, Ullal and other surrounding regions. The road is expected to significantly reduce congestion and improve access to the city, which serves as an important commercial and cultural hub of coastal Karnataka.

Addressing Congress party workers, Ivan D'Souza said the project was sanctioned with an allocation of ₹50 crore under the Smart City scheme during the tenure of former District In-charge and Urban Development Minister U.T. Khader. He described the four-lane underpass as a major gift to Mangaluru, particularly benefiting commuters from Kerala and the Ullal side.

D'Souza recalled that the project was conceptualised nearly five years ago by U.T. Khader but remained stalled for a long period due to various hurdles. "Seeing this long-pending project finally come to fruition is a matter of great satisfaction," he said, adding that the underpass would serve as a modern gateway to the city.

Mangaluru South Block Congress president Abdul Salim said Ivan D'Souza had played a key role in ensuring the project's completion. He noted that D'Souza visited the site five times in the last two months, exerting sustained pressure on government officials and contractors to expedite the work. "He led a continuous struggle until the project reached completion and is now ready to be dedicated to the people," Salim said.

He also urged the public to participate in large numbers in the inauguration programme and said any shortcomings in the project should be addressed promptly through the Smart City mission. Discussions were also held with Smart City Managing Director Arun Prabha regarding the project, and those involved in the effort were felicitated.

# Life Imprisonment Imposed in Mulki Double Murder Case

**MANGALURU**

The 2nd Additional District and Sessions Court in Mangaluru on Monday sentenced Alphonse Saldanha to life imprisonment for the double murder of an elderly couple in Elinje village of Mulki taluk.

The judge pronounced the verdict after hearing the case, which stemmed from an incident on April 29, 2020. The accused allegedly killed Vincent D'Souza (also known as Vincy) and his wife Helen D'Souza (also known as Helen Rosie Rodrigues) using an axe in a dispute related to cutting a tree near their house at Muthayyakere Aginkadu.

The investigation was initially conducted by then Mulki police station inspector Jayaram D. Gowda, who filed the chargesheet before the court. The trial was originally handled by the 1st Additional District and Sessions Judge Mallikarjun, but the final judgment and sentencing were delivered by the 2nd Additional District and Sessions Judge Jagadish.

# Dakshina Kannada Village Earns National Spotlight as GP President Invited to Republic Day Parade

**SULLIA (DAKSHINA KANNADA)**

Inner Mogru, a small village in Dakshina Kannada district, has found a place on the national map after its Gram Panchayat president, Triveni Pallattaru, received a special invitation to attend the 76th Republic Day parade in New Delhi in recognition of her village's exemplary development initiatives.

Triveni Pallattaru, president of the Inner Mogru Gram Panchayat, has been selected among five Gram Panchayat presidents from K'taka to attend the Republic Day celebrations on January 26. Her selection is seen as a matter of pride not only for Inner Mogru village but for the entire district.

The invitation follows the village's sustained efforts in promoting cleanliness, scientific waste management and environment-friendly local governance. Over the past two years, the Inner Mogru Gram Panchayat has successfully implemented door-to-door waste collection and systematic segregation of dry and wet waste, setting a benchmark for rural sanitation.

Dry waste collected from households is transported to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) at Kedambadi, while wet waste is processed locally through a composting unit within the village. This decentralised and sustainable waste management model has significantly reduced landfill burden and improved overall hygiene in the village.

# Harassment, Death Threats at Haradi Govt School: Parents, Teachers Seek MLA's Intervention

**PUTTUR**

Allegations of harassment and death threats by a student's parent have created fear among students, teachers and parents at the Haradi Government Higher Primary School in Puttur, prompting them to submit a complaint to MLA Ashok Rai seeking justice and protection.

According to the complaint, a Class 7 student, Neil Nikhil, alleged that he was repeatedly targeted by another student and, more alarmingly, threatened by the other student's father, identified as Annu. The complainant stated that despite not provoking any conflict, the accused parent allegedly waited near the school during recess hours, abused the child verbally and issued death threats, leaving the student traumatised and unwilling to attend school.

The complaint further states that on August 15, 2025, during Independence Day celebrations at the school, the accused allegedly threatened the student's mother as well, claiming he was not afraid of anyone and would not spare her son. Fearing for their safety, the student's parents were forced to change their residence. The child also alleged that the accused frequently enters classrooms without permission, questions students, seeks personal details of teachers, and intimidates everyone by his behaviour.

Expressing concern that his education and future could be ruined if the situation continues, the student urged the MLA to ensure his safety and provide a secure learning environment.

Taking the matter seriously, MLA Ashok Rai contacted the inspector of the women's police station, Sunil, and instructed him to treat the case with utmost seriousness and initiate immediate legal action. The MLA also noted that the accused is reportedly a government employee and directed that all possible legal steps be taken without delay.

SDMC president Sulochini said the accused frequently comes to the school and threatens children, teachers and parents, even stopping them on the road to issue threats. She alleged that despite complaints to the police earlier, no action had been taken so far.

Headmaster K.K. Master also urged the police to act promptly, stating that unnecessary fear is being instilled among students and that the school requires urgent intervention to restore a safe atmosphere.

# Amrit Bharat Express Approved Between Nagercoil and Mangaluru, Boosting South India Rail Connectivity

**SUBRAHMANYA (DAKSHINA KANNADA)**

In a significant boost to rail connectivity in South India, the Railway Board has granted official approval for the introduction of the Amrit Bharat Express train service between Nagercoil in Tamil Nadu and Mangaluru Junction in Karnataka.

According to a Railway Board communication issued on January 16 (CC–16/2026), train numbers 16329 and 16330 will be introduced as Amrit Bharat Express services under the Southern Railway's Chennai division. The new service will directly connect Tamil Nadu, Kerala and coastal Karnataka, offering faster travel, improved passenger amenities and a modern travel experience.

As per the approved schedule, Train No. 16329 Nagercoil–Mangaluru Junction Amrit Bharat Express will depart Nagercoil at 11.40 pm on Tuesdays and arrive at Mangaluru Junction at 5 am on Wednesdays. In the return direction, Train No. 16330 Mangaluru Junction–Nagercoil Amrit Bharat Express will leave Mangaluru Junction at 8 am on Wednesdays and reach Nagercoil at 10.05 pm the same day. Railway officials said the night and early-morning timings would greatly benefit employees, students, traders and long-distance travellers.

The train will run through the heart of Kerala, halting at several major stations, including Thiruvananthapuram Central, Varkala Sivagiri, Kollam, Kayamkulam, Chengannur, Kottayam, Ernakulam Town, Aluva, Thrissur, Shoranur, Tirur, Kozhikode, Thalassery, Kannur and Kasaragod, before reaching Mangaluru Junction — a key gateway to coastal Karnataka.

Initially, the service will operate once a week, with departures from Nagercoil on Tuesdays and from Mangaluru on Wednesdays. However, railway authorities indicated that frequency could be increased in the future depending on passenger response and demand.

Primary maintenance of the rake will be carried out at Nagercoil, with watering facilities at Kottayam, Shoranur and Kozhikode. Shoranur will function as the coaching technical centre.

The new service is expected to significantly enhance tourism, trade and cultural exchanges across southern Tamil Nadu, Kerala and coastal Karnataka, making travel to major pilgrimage and tourist destinations such as Kanyakumari, Shabarimala, Udupi, Kukke Subrahmanya, Kollur, Dharmasthala and Mangaluru more convenient.

## QUICK READ

### Lamborghini caught speeding, driver booked

**Bengaluru**

Acting suo motu on a video circulating on social media, Kengeri traffic police have booked the owner of a Lamborghini luxury car for rash driving and using a faulty silencer. The incident came to light after dashcam footage from another vehicle showed the Lamborghini suddenly speeding dangerously on Mysuru Road in the Kengeri area. Police traced the Maharashtra-registered car to a residence in Hejjalla. The owner told investigators that he had already paid a fine to the RTO for the faulty silencer and claimed he would replace it soon. However, police registered a fresh case under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Section 281 and provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act.

### Ram Madhav, Shobha Karandlaje appointed BJP election in-charges

**Bengaluru**

The Bharatiya Janata Party has named election in-charges for upcoming Kerala Assembly and Greater Bengaluru Authority polls. Ram Madhav, former BJP national general secretary, will oversee Greater Bengaluru Corporation elections, with Satish Poonia and Sanjay Upadhyay as co-in-charges. Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje has been appointed Kerala Assembly co-in-charge, while National General Secretary Vinod Tawde takes overall charge of Kerala elections. The appointments were issued by BJP National President Nitin Nabin Ji as the party prepares for strategic coordination ahead of the crucial state and local body polls.

### 36-year-old man killed in hit-and-run in Bengaluru

**Bengaluru**

A 36-year-old man, Parashuram of Madapatna, Yadgir district, was killed after being hit by an unidentified vehicle near Kammasandra in Bengaluru North taluk. He was walking to a friend's house when the accident occurred. The vehicle and driver fled the scene immediately. Parashuram sustained severe head injuries and was declared dead on the spot. Madanayakanahalli police have registered a case and launched an investigation. Efforts are ongoing to trace the driver and vehicle involved. The incident highlights growing concerns over road safety and hit-and-run accidents in the city.

# India must become innovation-driven powerhouse: Governor

India is emerging as a global powerhouse driven by knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurship

**BENGALURU**

Universities should actively nurture startups that address pressing challenges in rural development, health, education, environment, and digital inclusion, said Governor Thawarchand Gehlot. Speaking at the Association of Indian Universities South Zone Vice Chancellors Meet: 2025-26, hosted by MS Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, he emphasized that India can shift from a knowledge-based economy to an innovation-led superpower only when universities become hubs of entrepreneurship.

Highlighting the need for youth participation in national development, Gehlot stressed that exposure to cutting-edge knowledge and technology can enhance students' productivity, motivate self-employment, and contribute to overall economic growth. "South India has historically led in education, science, and technology. Cities like Bengaluru demonstrate that when academia, research, and industry converge, world-class startups and innovations emerge. This model must be replicated nationwide," he said.

The conference will also discuss fostering entrepreneurial thinking among students, establishing incubation and innovation centers to promote techno-nationalism, and strengthening university-industry collaboration for startup development. "Entrepreneurship is not just a tool for economic growth; it drives social change, sustainable development, and inclusive progress," the Governor added.

Governor Gehlot lauded national initiatives such as Startup India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and Make in India, emphasizing that the future depends on preparing graduates to become job creators. He noted that fostering a startup culture in higher education develops problem-solving skills, risk-taking ability, and creative thinking. Incubation centers, startup labs, industry-academia partnerships, and mentorship programs offer platforms for students to turn ideas into viable products and services.

He also praised MS Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences for its visionary academic environment, research activities, innovative teaching, interdisciplinary approach, modern infrastructure, and strong industry linkages, which provide students opportunities for intellectual and personal growth. The event was attended by MS Ramaiah University Chancellor Dr. MR Jayaram, AIU President Professor Vinay Kumar Pathak, General Secretary Dr. Pankaj Mittal, and other dignitaries.

This gathering underscores the pivotal role of higher education in India's journey from a knowledge-based economy to a global innovation-driven powerhouse.

# State Finance Commission Prepares GBA Fund Report

**BENGALURU**

The Chairman of the 5th State Finance Commission, Dr C Narayanaswamy, stated that recommendations for fund allocation will be prepared in line with the newly formed Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) and submitted to the state government.

Addressing a review and deliberation meeting at the GBA Head Office, Dr Narayanaswamy said the report will cover all aspects regarding allocation of funds to the GBA, the five City Corporations, and the 369 wards. "Suggestions obtained from consultations and pilot ward visits will be compiled, studied from multiple perspectives, and included in the final recommendations," he added.

He appreciated the swift implementation of the GBA by the State Government and the proactive response from the City Corporations. "The

system has been formed to ensure smooth administration across the five City Corporations," he said, noting that all relevant data has been provided for analysis.

Dr Narayanaswamy further said consultations have been held with the City Corporations, and pilot visits to select wards allowed a first-hand review of local conditions. Recommendations will consider the geographical, economic, and social profiles of each corporation, as well as inputs from the GBA and city bodies, ensuring a comprehensive and balanced approach.

Present at the meeting were members of the 5th State Finance Commission, Mohamed Sanaulla, RS Phonde, Advisor Dr Chaya Degaonkar, Special Commissioners Dr Harish Kumar, R Ramachandran, Suralkar Vikas Kishore, CEO of BSWML Karigowda, B-SMILE Technical Director BS Prahalad, Deputy Commissioners Gayathri Nayak and Ravindra, Assistant Commissioner Girish Nandan, among others.

BOX: GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao explained that BBMP has been reorganized into the GBA, and five City Corporations formed. The West City Corporation, with 112 wards, largely residential, may experience lower tax collection, he noted, emphasizing the need for efficient fund allocation strategies.

The Finance Commission's report will serve as a roadmap for equitable resource distribution, guiding Bengaluru's governance under the newly established GBA framework.

## Over 50 Illegal Hoardings Removed in Central Bengaluru Drive

**BENGALURU**

A special drive in Bengaluru Central City Corporation limits saw the removal of more than 51 unauthorized hoardings installed on pedestrian skywalks and bus shelters in a single day. Additional Commissioner (Development) Daljit Kumar said 8 hoardings were removed from pedestrian skywalks and 43 from bus shelters across five divisions.

The drive, conducted under the orders of Commissioner Rajendra Cholan, targeted illegal hoardings in Shanthinagar (7), CV Raman Nagar (6), Shivajinagar (13), Chickpet (22), and Gandhinagar (3). Officials emphasized that the initiative aims to curb illegal installations and educate the public and organizations on compliance.

Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers, Advertisement and Revenue Officers, along with sanitation staff, actively participated in the operation. Daljit Kumar added that the Corporation will continue such drives to remove flexes, banners, and hoardings that violate regulations, ensuring public spaces remain safe and clutter-free.

The Central City Corporation has been consistent in enforcing rules, warning that unauthorized advertising structures not only breach regulations but also pose hazards to pedestrians and commuters. Citizens and businesses are urged to follow proper channels for installing hoardings and banners. This drive reinforces the administration's commitment to urban order and safety while sending a clear message against illegal advertising practices.

## Excise DC, Superintendent Suspended Over ₹25 Lakh Bribe

**BENGALURU**

The Karnataka state government has suspended Excise Deputy Commissioner Jagadish Naik and Superintendent KM Thammanna, who were arrested for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 25 lakh to issue a license for selling liquor. The suspensions were issued under the Karnataka Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1957, pending further inquiry, said Bhimappa P Azure, Under-Secretary, Department of Finance (Excise). During this period, Jagadish Naik has been transferred to Shivamogga, while KM Thammanna has been posted to the KSBL depot in Tumkur. Both officials are barred from leaving their respective headquarters without prior permission from the competent authority.

A team led by City Division SP Shivaprakash Devaraj conducted an operation following allegations that a bribe of Rs 80 lakh was demanded and Rs 25 lakh accepted to issue liquor licenses for a hotel and a microbrewery unit. The operation resulted in the arrest of Jagadish Naik, KM Thammanna, and Constable Lakkappa Gani of Batarayanapura Division. Authorities have confirmed that a detailed investigation is underway to uncover the full extent of the alleged bribery and to hold all involved parties accountable under the law.

## MUDA Scam: Former Commissioner Dinesh Kumar Denied Bail

**BENGALURU**

The Karnataka High Court dismissed the bail petition of former Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) Commissioner GT Dinesh Kumar, who sought release from judicial custody in connection with a money laundering and illegal plot allocation case.

Dinesh Kumar, arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on September 17, 2025, faces allegations of misusing his authority to allot 283 plots worth over Rs 450 crore to ineligible individuals and transferring illegal funds. Following his arrest, ED attached properties valued at approximately Rs 40 crore belonging to him. A chargesheet detailing the irregularities was filed on November 19, 2025.

Hearing the case, a single-judge bench headed by Justice Sunil Dutt Yadav noted that prima facie evidence exists against the former MUDA Commissioner, and therefore, he cannot be released at this stage. The bench directed the ED to expedite the investigation to prevent unnecessary delay in judicial proceedings and allowed Dinesh Kumar the liberty to file another bail application if the investigation is not completed within three months.

Dinesh Kumar's lawyer had argued that he was cooperating fully with the investigation and was willing to abide by court-imposed conditions for bail. However, the ED maintained that the gravity of the allegations and the evidence on record justified continued judicial custody.

This ruling follows the earlier rejection of Dinesh Kumar's bail plea by the Special Court of People's Representatives on October 10, 2025. The former MUDA Commissioner remains in custody as investigations into the alleged scam continue. Authorities emphasize the ongoing probe aims to bring accountability for the large-scale misuse of public office and illegal allotment of valuable urban land.

## Youth arrested for stealing, wearing women's lingerie

**BENGALURU**

A 23-year-old unemployed man from Kerala, Amal NG, was arrested for stealing women's lingerie and taking selfies while wearing them, police said.

The accused, who moved to Bengaluru six months ago in search of a job and lives in a friend's room in Hebbagodi, targeted garments hung outside homes and paying guest accommodations. He was caught stealing inner garments from a house in Vidyanagar, after which residents alerted police. During a search of his room, authorities recovered 15–20 pairs of women's lingerie and multiple photos and videos showing him wearing them.

Hebbagodi police have registered a case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, and investigations are ongoing. Officers have warned residents to remain vigilant and report suspicious activity. Amal remains in police custody as further inquiries continue into his activities across the city.

## UK national, Lankan caught in boarding pass fraud

**BENGALURU**

A 52-year-old UK national and a Sri Lankan man were caught in a boarding pass fraud at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), exposing a daring plan to bypass immigration checks.

Kandiah Rajagopal, a businessman from West London, handed his Virgin Atlantic boarding pass to Sharusan Kunasekaran, allowing the Sri Lankan national to travel illegally to London. Kandiah, who had booked a 7:20 am flight to London but did not board, was arrested and lodged in Parappana Agrahara Central Prison. Sharusan was detained by UK authorities and will soon be deported to Sri Lanka.

The incident came to light when CISF personnel noticed Kandiah behaving suspiciously for nearly eight hours in the Terminal 2 departure area. Immigration checks revealed Kandiah was in India on a tourist visa and had traveled across Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. Investigations showed Sharusan had booked a flight to Singapore on IndiGo but failed to board.

Police learned the two men were acquaintances. Sharusan could not obtain a UK visa, and Kandiah allegedly devised the plan to help him reach London illegally. Both cleared CISF frisking and immigration separately before meeting inside a men's washroom, where Kandiah handed over his boarding pass. Kandiah then booked a ticket to Sri Lanka and loitered at the airport until detected.

During interrogation, Kandiah stated he has been in the hotel business in London for 30 years and survived a shootout in Trincomalee in 2012.

**QUOTA BALLOT PETITION**

# *HC Notices Separate Ballots for Women Candidates*

**BENGALURU**

The High Court has issued a notice to the State Bar Council regarding a petition seeking recognition of women candidates under the reservation quota as a separate category, and to arrange separate ballot papers for voting in the upcoming elections on March 11.

The petition was filed by advocate Sandhya U Prabhu, who aims to contest the elections. A single-judge bench headed by Justice BM Shyam Prasad issued notices to the Karnataka State Bar Council, the Bar Council of India, and the Returning Officer, asking the respondents to state their positions. The hearing was adjourned to February 6.

The court rejected the petitioner's interim plea seeking a stay on the January 5 election notification, clarifying that the election will proceed as scheduled.

Advocate Prabhu, appearing in person, explained that elections will fill 18 State Bar Council seats, with 7 reserved

for women. Of these, 2 are directly appointed by the Bar Council of India, while elections will be held for the remaining 5 seats. "With more than 200 candidates contesting, it will be difficult for voters to identify women candidates under the reserved quota. A separate category and ballot papers would simplify the process," she argued.

Earlier, in February 2025, the High Court had rejected a plea seeking reservation for lawyers from backward classes and Scheduled Castes and Tribes in Bangalore Bar Association office-bearer elections, noting that only the Supreme Court could authorize such reservations.

In separate petitions filed by the All India Backward Classes Lawyers Foundation and the Karnataka SC, ST Backward Classes Lawyers Federation, a bench headed by Justice R Devadas declined to pass any orders.

The Bar Council elections remain on track, but the petition by Prabhu has raised questions about transparency and accessibility for women candidates under the reservation quota. The court's upcoming February hearing will determine whether separate ballot papers will be mandated.

## Leopard sightings trigger panic in Nelamangala village

**BENGALURU**

Veerasagara village in Nelamangala taluk is gripped by fear following repeated leopard sightings over the past three months. The big cat has been roaming within village limits, preying on livestock and stray dogs. Recently, it killed a goat and a calf belonging to local resident Nagaraju. Just three days ago, it reportedly attacked and carried away two pet dogs owned by Siddaraju. Villagers have also reported multiple attacks on stray dogs, with CCTV footage capturing the leopard chasing a street dog through village streets, heightening residents' concerns. Locals alerted Nelamangala range forest officials, but villagers claim no concrete action has been taken so far. Many expressed fear for their safety, especially during early mornings and at night, and urged authorities to intervene promptly. Residents hope swift measures will prevent further loss of livestock and potential human-animal conflicts in the village.

# Police announce imminent arrest of Rajeev Gowda

**CHIKKABALLAPURA**

Chikkaballapura Superintendent of Police Kushal Chouksi has said that Congress leader Rajeev Gowda, who is accused of threatening the Municipal Commissioner of Shidlaghatta, will be arrested soon. He described Rajeev Gowda as a notorious criminal with multiple cases registered against him.

More than a week has passed since the complaint was filed accusing Rajeev Gowda of using indecent and threatening language against Shidlaghatta City Municipal Council Commissioner Amrutha Gowda. However, the accused has not yet been arrested and has reportedly been absconding since the day of the incident. This delay has raised serious questions among the public about equal justice for all.

Opposition leaders from the BJP and JDS have expressed strong anger, alleging that Rajeev Gowda is being protected by influential people. There are widespread claims that powerful ministers are standing behind him, which has increased public suspicion. Responding to these allegations, District In-charge Minister M.C. Sudhakar has clearly stated that there is no question of protecting anyone, regardless of their influence.

Police officials said special teams have been formed to trace the accused. Searches are being conducted intensively in several locations, including Bengaluru and neighbouring states. The High Court has also taken note of a petition related to the case, adding pressure on the police to act quickly. SP Kushal Chouksi said that Rajeev Gowda has a criminal background, with as many as 16 cases registered against him. He assured that the police have laid a trap and are closely monitoring possible hideouts. The officer said strict action will be taken and no one will be allowed to escape the law.

**Over a week after a complaint against Rajeev Gowda for threatening language toward Commissioner Amrutha Gowda, he remains absconding, raising public concerns about justice equality**

Meanwhile, public outrage continues to grow, with citizens demanding immediate arrest and fair treatment under the law. Many have urged the police to act without fear or favour and restore confidence in the justice system.

# Two transport officials suspended over illegal certificates

**BENGALURU**

In a major action against dereliction of duty, two transport officials have been suspended for issuing illegal vehicle fitness certificates. Shri Ramalinga Reddy was suspended on the orders of the Hon'ble Minister of Transport and Muzrai, while Shri Nisar Ahmed, Senior Motor Vehicle Inspector, was suspended by the Transport Commissioner.

The action follows an investigation by the e-detection team of the Gujarat State Transport Office.

The team examined data on the Vehicle e-detection portal and found that 41 vehicles, inspected at Karnataka RTO offices, were issued Form-38(A) fitness certificates without physical inspection. On the same day, these vehicles passed through toll plazas in Gujarat, indicating that the certificates had been approved illegally.

Following the discovery, the Minister directed the Transport Commissioner to take strict action.

The Commissioner instructed the Joint Transport Commissioner, Bangalore City Division, to submit a detailed report.

The findings confirmed that Shri Nisar Ahmed had renewed fitness certificates using the 4.0 software without checking the vehicles, violating the Motor Vehicles Act and departmental rules.

The Commissioner's order stated that approving certificates without proper inspection constitutes dereliction of duty. Both officials have been suspended immediately, sending a clear message about accountability and adherence to rules in the Transport Department.

# K'taka offers 75% medical discount to senior journalists

## Dr. Patil emphasized journalists as democracy's fourth pillar, promising simplified pension facilities for retired journalists for faster, easier access

**BENGALURU**

Karnataka government has announced special health benefits for senior journalists who have dedicated their lives to guiding and informing society. Journalists above 60 years will now get 75 percent discount on medical treatment in all hospitals under the Department of Medical Education. The remaining 25 percent may also be waived in the coming days, the government said.

The announcement was made by Dr. Sharanprakash R. Patil, Minister for Medical Education, Skill Development, Livelihood, and Raichur District In-charge, during a programme organized in Bengaluru. Health cards were distributed to senior journalists in this event, held jointly by the Department of Medical Education, Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, and the Senior Journalists' Forum.

Dr. Patil emphasized that journalists are an important part of society, often called the fourth pillar of democracy, and the government has a responsibility to care for them. He added that pension facilities for retired journalists will be simplified so that the process becomes easier and faster.

He also said that benefits from the Yashasvini health scheme might soon be extended to senior journalists, making healthcare access smoother. Identity cards are being issued through Jayadeva Institute to ensure proper registration and recognition.

Jayanagar MLA C.K. Ramamurthy, Jayadeva Institute Director Dr. B. Dinesh, Senior Journalists' Forum President R.P. Samba Sadashivareddy, and other senior officials including M.A. Ponnappa and Venkatesh Prasad attended the programme.

Dr. Patil concluded that the government's goal is to ensure retired journalists live a dignified and healthy life while continuing to inspire the next generation of media professionals.

# Three-day PMFME training begins from Jan 23

**CHITRADURGA**

A three-day capacity-building training under the Prime Minister's Scheme for Regulation of Small Food Processing Enterprises (PM-FME) will be held from January 23 to 25 at the District Agriculture Training Center, Babbur Farm. The program is organized in collaboration with Karnataka State Agricultural Produce Processing and Export Corporation and the Ministry of Food Processing. Dr. Hrishikesh A. Tavanandi, INSA Young Scientist Awardee 2021, will guide participants on starting and managing food processing enterprises, financial management, marketing, and legal compliances. Eligible PMFME beneficiaries can register by January 22 with Aadhaar and application number. First 60 applicants get priority.

# Minority students invited for skill training

**CHITRADURGA**

The District Minority Welfare Department, Chitradurga, has invited applications from eligible minority candidates for residential vocational skill training in collaboration with Aashirvad Pipes Private Limited, Bengaluru. Karnataka residents aged 18–35 from Muslim, Christian, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh and Parsi communities can apply by January 31. Applicants must have completed 8th standard or higher qualifications.

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**AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEE, SEDAM – 585 222**
E-mail : apmcsedam123@gmail.com office Ph : 08441-276030

No.AMD/APMC/SDM/DEV/ 569 / 2025-26 Date: 19-01-2026

**:: BRIEF E-TENDER NOTIFICATION ::**

APMC, Sedam hereby invites Tender for the following Development works Sanctioned under 2025-26 Annual Action Plan, from eligible e-portal registered PWD contractors in two cover system as per Karnataka Transparency Act 2000 through e-procurement portal. The contractors have to submit all tender related documents, itemized rates etc. by uploading through http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in website in standard documents KW-4. (With latest amendments)

1) Publication of Tender Notification: **22-01-2025 to 09-02-2026 up to 4.00 PM**, 2) Pre-Bid & Tender Query Meeting : **29-01-2026 at 3.00 PM**, 3) Last date submission of Tender: **09-02-2026 at 4.00 PM**, 4) Opening of Technical Bid: **12-02-2026 at 11.00 PM (On Or Before)**, 5) Opening of Financial Bid: **26-02-2026 at 4.00 PM (On Or Before),** 6) Place of opening of E-Tender bid : **APMC, Sedam**

1) Name of work: **Construction work of 04 sheds for cattle in Malkhed Cattle Sub-Market yard,** 2) Approximate value of work (Rs.) : **Rs. 1,11,75,693/- (Exclusive of GST),** 3) EMD Amount (in Rs.1.5%): **Rs. 2,00,000/-**, 4) Period of completion: 5.5 Months (Excluding monsoon), 5) Tender Fee: As per Kppp portal

Any other information required can be obtained from the office of the Secretary, Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Sedam-585222 during working days and hours or through website http:// **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

**Sd/- Secretary, A.P.M.C, Sedam.** **Sd/- Administrator, A.P.M.C, Sedam.**

DIPR/Kalaburagi/1001/KSMC&A/2025-26

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**Government of Karnataka**
**Office of the Executive Engineer**
**Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, Mysore – 570023**

**TENDER NOTIFICATION NO.20/ 2025-26/ DATED: 14-01-2026 (Two Cover System)**

On behalf of the Governor of Karnataka the Executive Engineer, Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, Mysore invites tender in co-ordination with e-procurement portal platform, Bangalore. Tender format as per **KW-3&4** through e-procurement under the Head of Account **2024-25 Year 5054 & 5054 Rain Damage Grant** for Mysore Taluk. Date of application submission for tender document and submission of filled tender through online **Date: 14.01.2026 to 03.02.2026 upto 16.00 hours, Pre Bid Meeting Date 28-01-2026 16.00 Hours.** Last date for clarifications/ queries on tender **Date: 02-02-2026 upto 16.00 Hours**. If possible the date of opening of technical bid of the tender **Date: 04-02-2026 after 17.00 hours**. After the approval of Technical bid the Financial Bid will be opened. Tender Form Fee: As per e-procurement Details as belows.

| Sl. No | Name of work | Estimate Cost (Rs.in Lakhs) | Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Construction of cc Drain and cc road in village limits of choranahalli, MB Halli, Kiralu, Rayanahundi,Makanahundi in between the of chikkalli village to Devalpura village in Mysore Taluk in Mysore District (RDPR/2025-26/RD/ WORK_ INDENT22802) | 150.00 | 1,88,000.00 |
| 2 | Construction of cc Drain and cc road in village limits of Megalapura,Madhavagere,Hosahalli, Siddaramanahundi in between the road of from Hallikerehundivillage to pillahalli village in Mysore Taluk in Mysore District (RDPR/2025-26/RD/ WORK_ INDENT22821) | 100.00 | 1,24,000.00 |
| 3 | Improvements of road from kebya-somashe karapura main road to siddarameshwara temple road in Nanjangud Taluk (RDPR/2025-26/RD/ WORK_INDENT 23040) | 60.00 | 98,400.00 |

**Contractor Eligibility:** Class – III& above

For more details visit website: htpp://www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in or contact the Executive Engineer, Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, Mysore (Ph: 0821-2560853) during office hours.

**AE Phone No.:** 8123267587

DIPR/DDMYS/1542/KSMCA/874/2025-26 **Sd/- Executive Engineer, PRED Division, Mysore**

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ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಹಾಸನ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನಗಳ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ, ಹಾಸನ

**HASSAN INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, HASSAN (An Autonomous Institute under the Dept of Medical Education, Government of Karnataka) SRI CHAMARAJENDRA HOSPITAL CAMPUS, HASSAN**

Website: https://himshassan.karnataka.gov.in/
Phone/Fax No.08172-231699, 231599,
Email:directorhims@yahoo.com

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: HIMS/TS/OGT/5/2025-TNDR-HIMS-HSN ದಿನಾಂಕ: 19.01.2026

**E-TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through e-procurement only)**

Hassan Institute of Medical Sciences, Hassan, invites tender for Office Attender Services to HIMS Hassan from the Authorized Agency in two cover bid system as per KTPP Act 1999 SI No Tender Notification No 01)HIMS/TS/OGT/5/2025-TNDR-HIMS-HSN Details Office Attender Services Tender Uploading Date & Last Date 28.01.2026 to 26.02.2026 Estimated Cost of Tender Rs 314.14 Lakhs EMD (Rs)Rs 4.71 Lakhs Tender details can be viewed , downloaded and applied only through the e-procurement mode only website : www.kpppuat.karnataka.gov.in For further details contact/visit office during working hours.

**Sd/- Chief Administrative officer, Hassan Institute of Medical Science, Hassan.**

ಹಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಹಿಸನಿ/ಹಾಸನ/959/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

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**GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA**
**MINOR IRRIGATION & GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION & GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT DIVISION, BELAGAVI.**
**PH NO.0831-2463850 / FAX NO.0831-2423008**

No.EE /MI&GWDDD/BGM/TND/AE/2025-26/4894 Date:20-01-2026

**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (KW-1, 2 & 3)**

As per KTTP Act-2000 and recent Amendments the Executive Engineer Minor Irrigation & Ground Water Development Department Division Belagavi has invited the Item rate tender through KPPP (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in). Total 08 Nos. of Gokak/Athani Sub Divisions. Estimate Amount Highest Rs.70.00 Lakhs & Lowest Rs.19.00 Lakh. 1. Tender Receipt Last Date:29-01-2026 Evening 4.00 PM, 2. Tender Opening Date:30-01-2026 Evening 4.30 PM (if possible), 3. For Tender Details office address: Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation & Ground Water Development Department Division Belagavi & www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in

**Sd/-Executive Engineer, M.I & GWDD Division, Belagavi.**

DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-1672/KSMCA/2025-26

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**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, VENKATAHANUMAKKA W/o MAREGOWDA, R/o Channashattihalli, Herur, Gubbi, Tumkur, Karnataka-572216, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as BHAAGYAMMA.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, MANIKANT SHIVAKUMAR BEVINAMARAD S/o SHIVAKUMAR DHANANJAYA BEVINAMARAD, R/o FF204, Gajanand Mandir Apts, 3rd Cross, Venkataswamappa Layout, Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore, Karnataka-560097, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as VIHAN B.

**Document Lost**

This is to inform to General public that my client Smt.Vaheedha D/o Khasimkhan, Residing at Gownipalli Village, Gownipalli Grama Panchayath, Rayalapadu Hobali, Srinivasapura Taluk, Kolar District, I am the Owner of the Below said Property, while Sale Deed for taken Certified copy, have lost following Document of property pertating to below Mentioned property Situated at Gownipalli Village, Gownipalli Grama Panchayath, Rayalapadu Hobali, Srinivasapura Taluk, Kolar District, had published the factum of lost of her Original Sale Deed ,Dated;-20-12-2023, Regd Sale Deed Executed by Sri.Mohammed Rafik khan s/o Rahimkhan, in Favour of Smt.Vaheedha D/o Khasimkhan., In regd as Book No.1,Volume No.SVP-1-03265/2023-24,In regd before of the SRO Srinivasapura, police complaint have been filed with regards to loss of the above said Document vide complaint in NCR NO. Lost Report no.2020569/2026, DATED;-21-01-2026, and complaint dated;-21-01-2026, by respective person, if anybody finds these Document please inform within 7 Days in Below mentioned Address.

Place;-Chinthamani,
Date;-16-01-2026 K.S.HARISH KUMAR ADVOCATE
Office: NEAR KISHORE SCHOOL, ABOVE APPOLO PHARMACY, BESIDE SANTHOSHI MATHA TEMPLE, BANGALORE MAIN ROAD CHINTHAMANI.M;-9980110692

**Document Lost**

This is to inform to General public that my client Sri.Narsimhappa S/o Chinnappa , Residing at no Kakalachinta Village, Aruru Gramapanchayath, Mandikal Hobali, Chikkaballapura Taluk, Chikkaballapura District, I am the Owner of the Below said Property, while Sale Deed for taken Certified copy ,have lost following Document of property pertating to below Mentioned property Situated at no. Kakalachinta Village, Aruru Gramapanchayath, Mandikal Hobali, Chikkaballapura Taluk, Chikkaballapura District , had published the factum of lost of her Original Sale Deed, Dated;- 28-04-2005, Regd Sale Deed, Executed By Sri.Chandrashekar S/o Dyavappa ,In Favour of Sri.H N Narasimharao S/o H K Narayanarao In regd as Book No.1,Volume No.CKB-1-000161/2006-07,CD No.CKBD8,In regd before of the SRO Chikkaballapura, police complaint have been filed with regards to loss of the above said Document vide complaint in NCR NO. Lost Report no.2019007/2026, DATED;-16-01-2026, and complaint dated;-16-01-2026, by respective person, if anybody finds these Document please inform within 7 Days in Below mentioned Address.

Place;-Chinthamani,
Date;-16-01-2026 K.S.HARISH KUMAR ADVOCATE
Office: NEAR KISHORE SCHOOL, ABOVE APPOLO PHARMACY, BESIDE SANTHOSHI MATHA TEMPLE, BANGALORE MAIN ROAD CHINTHAMANI.M;-9980110692

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ಮಾನ್ಯ ಪ್ರಧಾನ ಸಿವಿಲ್ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಧೀಶರ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಲಯ
ಮತ್ತು ಜೆ.ಎಂ.ಎಫ್.ಸಿ ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ.
ಸಿ.ಮಿಸ್. ನಂ. 596/2025

ಅರ್ಜಿದಾರರು : ಶ್ರೀ. ಹೊಸಳ್ಳಾರಾದ್ಯ ಬಿನ್ ಲೇಟ್ ಪರಮಶಿವಯ್ಯ ವಯಸ್ಸು ಸುಮಾರು 51 ವರ್ಷ, ವಾಸ : ಬಸವೇಶ್ವರನಗರ, 1ನೇ ವಾರ್ಡ್, ಪುಟಾಣಿ ಸೈಟ್ ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ.

ವಿರುದ್ಧ

ಎದುರುದಾರರು : ನೋಂದಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ಜನನ ಮತ್ತು ಮರಣಗಳ ರಿಜಿಸ್ಟ್ರಾರ್, ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು, ನಗರಸಭೆ, ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ನಗರ,

ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕರಲ್ಲಿ ತಿಳಿಯಪಡಿಸುವುದೇನೆಂದರೆ ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಅರ್ಜಿದಾರರು ಘನ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಲಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಅರ್ಜಿದಾರರ ತಂದೆಯವರಾದ ದಿವಂಗತ ಪರಮಶಿವಯ್ಯ ಬಿನ್ ಲೇಟ್ ಭದ್ರಯ್ಯ ಇವರು ದಿನಾಂಕ: 01.11.2017 ರಂದು ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ನಗರ, ಪುಟಾಣಿ ಸೈಟ್, 1ನೇ ವಾರ್ಡ್, ಬಸವೇಶ್ವರನಗರ ಈ ವಿಳಾಸದಲ್ಲಿ ಮರಣ ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಅವರ ಮರಣದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ಅಧಿಕೃತ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳು ಇಲ್ಲದ ಸಲುವಾಗಿ ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಅಜಿಯನ್ನು ಜನನ ಮತ್ತು ಮರಣಗಳ ನೋಂದಣಿ ಕಾಯ್ದೆ 1969ರಂತೆ ಎದುರುದಾರರ ಜನನ ಮರಣದ ದಾಖಲಾತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮರಣದ ದಿನಾಂಕವನ್ನು ನೋಂದಣಿ ಮಾಡಲು ಅರ್ಜಿಯನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ ಆದಾಗಿ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕರಿಗೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಣೆ ಇದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಘನ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಲಯದ ಮುಂದೆ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 09.03.2026ರಂದು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11-00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ಹಾಜರಾಗಲು ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ತಿಳಿಯಪಡಿಸಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ತಪ್ಪಿದಲ್ಲಿ ತಮ್ಮ ಗೈರು ಹಾಜರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕರಣವನ್ನು ಏಕಪಕ್ಷೀಯವಾಗಿ ಇತ್ಯರ್ಥಪಡಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು. ಸದರಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯನ್ನು ದಿನಾಂಕ : 13.01.2026 ರಂದು ನನ್ನ ಸಹಿ ಮತ್ತು ನ್ಯಾಯಾಲಯದ ಮಾಹರಿನೊಂದಿಗೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ನ್ಯಾಯಾಲಯದ ಆದೇಶದ ಮೇರೆಗೆ
By Order of the Court
Chief Ministeral Officer
Prl Civil Judge And JMFC Doddaballapur.

ಅರ್ಜಿದಾರರ ಪರ ವಕೀಲರು : ಮುನಿಗಂಗಯ್ಯ, ವಕೀಲರು, ನ್ಯಾಯಾಲಯದ ಎದುರು, ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ.

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**CITY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MALUR, KOLAR DISTRICT, KOLAR**

Maharaja circle Malur-563130
E-mail: ka.malur.tmc@gmail.com, phone:08151-232238
Letter No:TMC/AE/E-Proc/CR/15/2025-26
Date:20.01.2026

**TENDER NOTIFICATION**
**(as per the conditions of the Standarad Tender Document E-Procuement Tender Notification)**

Constructions of Roads Work in Malur CMC under SFC Special grant and item rate is invited in KPPP portal. For more details visit KPPP PORTAL The Indent Numbers details below. Any addendums will be notified through e-procurement only. **(1)** DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_ INDENT52029/CALL-2 Rs.72.80 Lakhs, **(2)** DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT 52088/CALL-2 Rs.79.50 Lakhs, **(3)** DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT52093/CALL-2 Rs.34.20 Lakhs, **(4)** DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT52100 Rs.174.00 Lakhs, **(5)** DMA/2025-26/SE7123.

**Sd/- (Dr.M.R.Ravi, IAS) Administrator CMC, Malur. And Deputy commissioner Kolar dist, Kolar.**

**Sd/- Commissioner CMC, Malur.**

DIPR/KOLAR/R.O.No.456/KSMC&A/2025-26

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**THE KARUR VYSYA BANK LTD**
ASSET RECOVERY BRANCH
Divisional Office Building, No.6, Shri Vasavi Temple Road, Near Sajjan Rao Circle, V V Puram, Bangalore - 560004

**SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES**

**E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002**

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, **The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd,** the constructive/ physical (whichever is applicable) possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd.,** Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is"** on **06.02.2026** for recovery of **Rs.2,24,83,352.14/-** (Rupees Two Crore Twenty Four Lakhs Eighty Three Thousand Three Hundred Fifty Two and Paise Fourteen Only) due to **"The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd",** Secured Creditor from **(1) Mr. Nahuman P M (Borrower)** S/o Late P.S. Moidin Kutty, **(2) Mr. Mohammed Fayaz (Borrower)** S/o. Late P.S. Moidin Kutty, **(3) Mrs. Nafeesa @ Nafeesa M.A** W/o. Late P.S. Moidin Kutty, **(4) Mrs. Sahida** W/o. Yusuf, **(5) Mrs. Ayisha** W/o. Hasinar and **(6) Mrs. Ruksana,** W/o Abdul Khader**, All are residing at:** D.No.4-68(2), ANAS Mansion, Opp Village Office, Manjanady, Mangalanthi Post, Mangalore-575018, **(7) M/s. Arsh Veeners (Borrower), Represented By: Nahuman P M,** Survey No.26/3, Shambunatha Pura Village, Gorur Road, Kasaba Hobli, Arkalgud, Karnataka-573102.

The reserve price will be **Rs.45,00,000/-(Rupees Forty Five Lakhs only)** and the earnest money deposit will be **Rs.4,50,000/- (Rupees Four Lakhs Fifty Thousand Only)**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

All the piece and parcel of the property bearing R.S.No.61-9, Manjanady Village, Mangalore Taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, D.No.4-68(2), **"ANAS Mansion"**, Opp Village Office, Manjanady, Measuring 16 Cents, Mangalanthi Post, Mangalore-575018. bounded on: East By: S.D Line and Property of Mr. P.S Attaulla, West By: P.S. Attaulla, North By: Portion of same S.D and, South By: Portion of same SD

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in our Bank's/Secured Creditor's website i.e., **www.kvb.co.in/** Property Under Auction also at the web portal **BankAuctions.in/ForeclosureIndia.com** of the service provider, **M/s. 4 closure.**

**Statutory 15 days' Notice under Rule 9(1) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002**

The borrower/s and guarantor/s are hereby notified to pay the dues as mentioned above along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of e-Auction, failing which the Schedule property will be auctioned/ sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest and cost.

**Date : 21.01.2026** **Sd/- Authorized Officer**
**Place: Bangalore** **THE KARUR VYSYA BANK LIMITED**

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

QUICK READ

## TN NDA vows to oust DMK govt soon

**Chennai**

Union Minister Piyush Goyal said on Wednesday that the NDA in Tamil Nadu is committed to removing the DMK government, which he accused of attacking the people, culture, and pride of the state. This comes just after the AMMK, led by TTV Dhinakaran, rejoined the NDA. Goyal praised Dhinakaran's leadership and popularity and said the alliance, including AIADMK, PMK, and TMC leaders, would work together to provide good governance and a bright future for Tamil Nadu's youth.

## Families await closure months after cloudburst

**Jammu**

Months after a cloudburst in Chisoti village, Kishtwar, families of the missing are still waiting for closure. Rajesh Kumar and Bindiya from Punjab search for their 22-year-old daughter and her friend, who vanished in August 2025. Another family lost eight members. The victims' families seek death certificates, not compensation, to perform final rituals. With DNA reports pending, the uncertainty grows. Around 65 people died, mostly pilgrims, and over 30 remain missing, as loved ones press for answers and justice.

## LIC officer murdered manager over document scam

**Madurai**

What seemed like an accidental fire at a Madurai LIC office on December 17 is now confirmed as murder. Assistant officer Ram, injured in the fire, killed Senior Branch Manager Kalyani Nambi to hide document irregularities. Police said Nambi caught Ram burning documents and tried to call her son, but Ram allegedly poured petrol on her, locked her in, and set the room on fire. Ram was arrested after CCTV footage and his confession revealed the premeditated crime.

# World must display zero tolerance towards terrorism: EAM

Jaishankar stressed that nations must unite against terrorism, highlighting India and Spain's shared experiences.

**NEW DELHI**

During a bilateral meeting with Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, Jaishankar said the global order is changing, making cooperation on common challenges vital, especially in fighting terrorism.

"The world must display zero tolerance towards terrorism," he said, noting both countries have been victims. He also condoled the recent Cordoba train accident in Spain, which killed at least 40 people, and expressed sympathies for the injured and their families.

The meeting also highlighted India-Spain ties, marked by shared democratic values, high-level exchanges, and growing cooperation in defence, AI, and trade. Jaishankar pointed out the upcoming 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2026, along with the Dual Year of Culture, Tourism, and Artificial Intelligence, launched with a logo selected from 1,900 entries.

Defence collaboration includes the Airbus-Tata C-295 aircraft assembly in Vadodara, with the first "Made-in-India" plane expected this year. Bilateral trade exceeds $8 billion, with Indian and Spanish companies actively contributing to infrastructure, energy, IT, pharmaceuticals, and smart city projects.

Jaishankar expressed optimism that strengthened ties in culture, technology, and industry will benefit both nations and encourage responsible, human-centric AI development.

**Jaishankar, Albares vow to strengthen India-Spain ties**

EAM Jaishankar met Spanish FM Jose Albares to discuss trade, defence, technology, education, and people-to-people ties. They highlighted EU-India Free Trade Agreement, joint Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative participation, combating terrorism, and shared democratic values. Spain's President will soon visit India, while both nations celebrate 70 years of diplomatic relations in 2026.

### Spanish president Sanchez to visit India soon

Spain's President Pedro Sanchez will soon visit India, said Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares. He hopes Prime Minister Modi will visit Spain too. Albares highlighted joining the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative, upgrading ties to a strategic partnership, fostering trade, defence cooperation, and celebrating the Dual Year of Culture, Tourism, and AI.

# Easing defence FDI norms could be a game-changer for India: Report

**NEW DELHI**

India is planning a major relaxation of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rules in the defence sector, potentially raising the automatic route ownership cap for existing licensed defence firms from 49 to 74 per cent and removing unclear conditions, a recent report has highlighted.

The move aims to attract global manufacturers, encourage joint ventures, and bring advanced technology to strengthen domestic production under the 'Make in India' initiative. Experts say this could boost economic growth, create jobs, and enhance national security.

Historically, India has limited foreign involvement in defence due to security concerns. While FDI up to 49 per cent was allowed in 2016, and 74 per cent for new licences by 2020, existing firms remained capped at 49 per cent. The proposed change would give multinational companies greater operational control, intellectual property protection, and ownership clarity.

India's defence market exceeded USD 75 billion in 2025–26, with plans to increase the budget by 20 per cent in 2026–27. Liberalised norms could attract USD 5–10 billion in the next decade and reduce import dependence, which currently covers 60–70 per cent of defence needs.

Technology transfer from allies like the US, France, and Israel could help India indigenise fighter jets, submarines, missiles, AI, cybersecurity, and hypersonics. Analysts note India could emulate countries like Turkey, Brazil, and Vietnam, leveraging free-trade agreements and skilled labour to become a defence exporter.

The report also highlighted security risks, competition concerns for domestic firms, and bureaucratic hurdles. Experts recommended safeguards for sensitive areas, incentives for local suppliers, streamlined approvals, and joint ventures to ensure domestic industry benefits while boosting defence manufacturing.

*The award recognizes her impact on marginalized communities and social justice in Africa and beyond*

# Graca Machel wins Indira Gandhi Peace Prize

**NEW DELHI**

Graca Machel, former Education and Culture Minister of Mozambique, has been awarded the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development for 2025.

The award recognises her exceptional work as a stateswoman and humanitarian, highlighting her lifelong efforts to protect human rights and promote social justice in Southern Africa.

The International Jury, chaired by Shivshankar Menon, India's former National Security Advisor, cited her transformative contributions in education, health, nutrition, economic empowerment, and humanitarian work under challenging circumstances. "She has inspired millions to build a more equitable and just world," the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust stated.

Born on October 17, 1945, Machel studied at mission schools and later the University of Lisbon, where she became politically active. Returning to Mozambique in 1973, she joined the liberation movement FRELIMO and fought for independence. After independence in 1975, she became Mozambique's first Minister of Education and Culture, boosting school enrolment dramatically for boys and girls.

Machel's international influence spans founding The Elders, Girls Not Brides, and membership in the UN SDG Advocacy Group. She leads the Africa Child Policy Forum and the Mandela Institute for Development Studies, advancing policies for vulnerable youth. She also established the Graca Machel Trust and Zizile Institute to support women's empowerment, food security, and child development.

Her efforts have earned global recognition, including the WHO Gold Medal in 2018 for improving women's and adolescents' well-being. The jury praised her ability to create lasting social transformation through leadership, policy influence, and humanitarian initiatives.

# Global election heads gather at IICDEM-2026 Delhi Plenary

**NEW DELHI**

Heads of 42 election management bodies attended a high-level plenary on Wednesday at the India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) 2026, held at Bharat Mandapam. The session provided a platform for in-depth discussions on modern challenges to election administration.

The proceedings were led by Chief Election Commissioner of India Gyanesh Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi. Around 60 international delegates, including electoral leaders, ambassadors, and high commissioners, actively participated.

The plenary allowed participants to share experiences, address common hurdles, and explore solutions for challenges such as misinformation, technological disruptions, and promoting inclusive voter participation. Discussions stressed the need for stronger international cooperation to protect election integrity.

India, serving as chair of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) in 2026, presented thematic priorities including electoral innovation, capacity building, and global partnerships to tackle emerging issues. Delegates shared perspectives on digital transparency, safeguarding voter rights, and responding to geopolitical shifts affecting democratic stability.

The session highlighted India's growing leadership in global electoral dialogue, drawing on its experience in managing large-scale, diverse elections. Organised by the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management under the Election Commission of India, IICDEM-2026 continues over three days with plenary and thematic sessions.

With participation from over 70 countries, the conference promotes best practices, technology, and mutual learning among election stakeholders. Outcomes are expected to strengthen global cooperation and enhance democratic standards worldwide.

## MGNREGA replacement snatches people's rights: Cong

**NEW DELHI**

The Congress on Wednesday alleged that the government is snatching people's rights by replacing MGNREGA with a new scheme called VB-G RAM G. The party is organising a dialogue on Thursday, where workers will participate, bringing a fistful of soil from their work sites to symbolise their struggle.

Sandeep Dikshit, Chairperson of Rachnatmak Congress, said MGNREGA had been a lifeline during the Covid period, helping millions build roads, schools, panchayat buildings, ponds, and water harvesting structures. "People's rights are being taken away. The government is destroying the very process that supported local development," he said.

The 'MGNREGA Bachao Sangram' is ongoing in several states and districts, he added, and workers from across India will arrive at Jawahar Bhawan in Delhi to share their experiences and discuss future strategies. Dikshit said the programme will allow people to narrate their struggles and collectively send a message of resistance.

"Each worker will bring a fistful of soil from their MGNREGA work site. All soils will be collected together as a symbol of people's struggle and contribution to nation-building," he said.

The Congress leader accused the Modi government of undermining the panchayats' role in deciding local development and alleged that replacing MGNREGA weakens the rights of farmers and labourers who have long relied on the scheme for livelihood and community development.

## JD-U doesn't need RCP Singh: Bihar minister

**PATNA**

Bihar Transport Minister Shrawon Kumar on Wednesday stated that the Janata Dal-United (JD-U) has no need for leaders like RCP Singh. He criticised Singh's past actions, saying the former Union Minister had questioned Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's health and ability to govern.

"Until yesterday, he was telling people that Nitish Kumar was ill, unwell, and incapable of working," Kumar said. He added that the parties Singh later joined had vowed to quit politics if they won even 25 seats but instead tried to finish off Nitish Kumar. "There is no need for those who, until yesterday, were trying to destroy Nitish Kumar and are now desperate to bow before him," the minister said.

Kumar also questioned Singh's political journey. "He formed his own party, which failed, then joined the Jan Suraaj Party, whose leaders also tried to finish off Nitish Kumar. With what ideology does he now want to return and stand with Nitish Kumar?" he asked.

# Gujarat farmers get ₹986 crore under PM KISAN Samman Nidhi

**GANDHINAGAR**

The Gujarat government has disbursed over Rs 9,466 crore in financial aid to more than 32 lakh farmers impacted by unseasonal rains, Agriculture Minister Jitu Vaghani said on Wednesday after a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.

Vaghani stated that online bills worth Rs 9,516 crore have been generated so far under the state's agricultural relief package. "As of today, 32.49 lakh farmers have received more than Rs 9,466 crore directly in their bank accounts," he said.

The minister shared that October 2025's unseasonal rainfall affected crops across 33 districts. Online bills worth Rs 8,610 crore were prepared for 30,06,865 farmers, of which Rs 8,571 crore has already been disbursed to 29,93,689 beneficiaries.

Heavy rainfall in September 2025 impacted five districts, with bills worth Rs 792 crore prepared for 2,34,386 farmers. Assistance of Rs 791.19 crore has been paid to 2,33,777 beneficiaries in these areas.

ADDRESS THE NEEDS

# *ASHA stir, rallies choke Kolkata roads*

**KOLKATA**

Thousands of ASHA workers blocked major roads in Kolkata's Esplanade and Salt Lake on Wednesday after police stopped their march to the health department headquarters.

The protest aimed to demand a minimum monthly honorarium of Rs 15,000 and insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh for on-duty deaths.

The workers, coming from several districts, were first stopped near Sealdah and Howrah railway stations. Around 1,000 regrouped at Esplanade and Karunamoyee, attempting to continue, but police again halted them at multiple points, including Moulali, Bowbazar, and Dorina Crossing. In Salt Lake, some tried to scale barricades outside Swasthya Bhawan, leading to scuffles with police.

The workers, who have been on a 'cease-work' since December 23, said they had not received payments for months despite working long hours for medical emergencies and welfare programmes. Chandana Barik, an ASHA worker, said, "We get around Rs 5,500 a month for 15-16 hours daily. How are we supposed to manage?"

Traffic in Kolkata and Salt Lake was disrupted for over two hours, and several protesters were detained for refusing to disperse. Police termed the gathering illegal due to no prior permission. State officials denied any prior assurance of a meeting, though workers cited Health Secretary N S Nigam had promised to hear grievances on January 21.

Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari criticized the police action as "barbaric" and accused the state government of brutality against women. Meanwhile, one protester fell ill and was attended to by police and health personnel at the site.

# Chhattisgarh cabinet approves excise, education, IT, healthcare deals

**RAIPUR**

The Chhattisgarh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Wednesday, approved major proposals to strengthen revenue, education, technology, and healthcare infrastructure across the state.

The Cabinet cleared the Chhattisgarh Excise Policy for 2026-27, allowing the Excise Department to implement the framework and revenue measures. Details of the policy will be notified soon.

In education, the state allotted 40 acres in Sector-18, Nava Raipur Atal Nagar, to Shri Vile Parle Kelavani Mandal (SVKM) on a 90-year lease. The land will host the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS), a top-ranking national university. Officials said this will enhance access to quality management education in Chhattisgarh.

To promote IT and entrepreneurship, the Cabinet approved a Memorandum of Understanding with Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) to set up four innovation centres in Nava Raipur. These centres will support 133 startups in AI, MedTech, Smart City, and Smart Agriculture over three to five years. An Electronics System Design and Development (ESDD) centre will assist 30–40 hardware startups and MSMEs annually.

In healthcare, proposals were cleared to strengthen diagnostic services at district hospitals, community health centres, and primary health centres. The measures aim to improve lab operations, increase test volumes, and reduce dependency on private facilities.

Officials said these steps will enhance public services, promote entrepreneurship, and improve access to quality education and healthcare throughout Chhattisgarh.

## QUICK READ

### Over 11L winged visitors grace Chilika lake

**Bhubaneswar**

Nearly 12,645 birds were recorded during the Asian waterbird census at Odisha's Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary, officials said on Tuesday. Out of these, 4,071 were migratory birds, covering 73 species. The survey was conducted by 12 teams and 82 volunteers. Birds like Northern pintail, tufted ducks, gadwall, Red-crested pochard, river terns, and black-headed ibis were seen. Binod Acharya, DFO, said many kinds of birds were spotted. Meanwhile, a dolphin census has started in Chilika Lake to study population and habitat.

### SC extends arrest protection for 3 accused

**New Delhi**

The Supreme Court on Wednesday extended protection from arrest to three people accused in the Rs 3,500 crore Andhra Pradesh liquor scam. The accused—Balaji Govindappa, Pellakuru Krishna Mohan Reddy, and K Dhanunjaya Reddy—had earlier challenged the High Court's rejection of their bail plea. The bench led by CJI Surya Kant rejected their bail but asked them to seek regular bail in trial court. The SIT, set up by the current government, is probing alleged corruption and kickbacks during 2019–2024.

### Assam Rifles seize drugs, foreign currency

**Silchar**

Assam Rifles, along with the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, seized Yaba tablets worth Rs 39 crore in Cachar district. Three Tripura residents were caught transporting 1,30,000 tablets on NH-306. Two trucks and mobile phones were also recovered. In another operation in Siaha district, Assam Rifles intercepted a vehicle carrying Burmese currency worth 1.75 crore, smuggled tobacco, and foreign cigarettes. A 37-year-old man from Myanmar was arrested. Both the seized items and the accused were handed over to local police for further action.

# 'India's election management changed greatly over past decades'

'India conducts elections on a scale spanning 28 states and 8 union territories'.

**NEW DELHI**

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar welcomed international delegates at the International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) 2026 in New Delhi on Wednesday.

He said the work of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) has evolved significantly, adding that India conducts elections on an unprecedented scale across 28 states and 8 union territories, serving 1.5 billion people.

Bharat Mandapam hosts nearly 60 international delegates and over 1,000 participants, including 42 EMBs, ambassadors from 27 countries, and experts from 70 national institutions. ECs Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi highlighted citizens' trust in EMBs and the collective responsibility to protect voter choice.

Rakesh Verma, DG IIIDEM, noted that the theme "Democracy for an inclusive, peaceful, resilient, and sustainable world" reflects the evolving global understanding of democracy. Participants also viewed a glimpse of the docuseries India Decides, produced with Warner Bros. Discovery, showing India's general elections and the complexity of its electoral processes.

The programme includes general and plenary sessions, EMB leaders' plenary, working group meetings, and thematic sessions on global electoral issues, international standards, and innovative practices. IICDEM 2026 is expected to be India's largest global conference on democracy and election management, bringing together academics, election practitioners, and representatives from over 70 countries to share knowledge and strengthen democratic processes worldwide.

# Rahul Gandhi demands action over Delhi waterlogging

**NEW DELHI**

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday criticised governance failures in Delhi after sharing a video showing severe waterlogging in Mubarakpur Dabas's Sharma Enclave. Highlighting residents' hardships, he called the situation "urban rot" caused by a "pandemic of greed" and demanded accountability from authorities.

In his X post, Gandhi said citizens' lives have become "hellish torment" while the system serves those in power. He warned that if authorities fail to act, "this rot will reach every doorstep." The video, shot by a local journalist, showed waterlogged streets where residents struggled to move and manage the crisis themselves. Locals said the situation has worsened over six to eight months and accused the government of inaction, urging immediate clearance of drainage and sanitation issues.

Meanwhile, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee President Devender Yadav visited the Kirari Assembly constituency to assess waterlogging problems. He interacted with residents whose daily lives have been severely disrupted due to overflowing water. Yadav promised to raise the issues with relevant authorities and seek urgent solutions.

**He termed the severe waterlogging in Delhi's Sharma Enclave a "pandemic of greed" and urged authorities to take immediate action.**

The incident has sparked wider criticism of municipal management in Delhi, with opposition leaders calling for stricter accountability and faster action to prevent recurring urban flooding. Citizens have voiced frustration over prolonged neglect of drainage infrastructure, fearing health hazards and damage to property if the problem continues unchecked. Gandhi's remarks and the video aim to highlight the urgent need for systemic reforms to address urban water management failures in the national capital.

## Acharya Lokesh Muni launches global peace initiative

**NEW DELHI**

Jain spiritual leader Acharya Lokesh Muni on Wednesday emphasised that war, violence, and terrorism have no place in today's world. Speaking during the fifth day of a nine-day katha organised by Pujya Morari Bapu in Delhi for the World Peace Centre Mission, he highlighted a new initiative aimed at resolving global conflicts through dialogue.

Acharya Lokesh Muni said he has been tasked with forming a globally impactful committee to intervene in conflict zones and promote peaceful solutions. "Wherever there is conflict, war, or violence, that committee will intervene and resolve it through dialogue," he said. He added that the katha also serves as a platform to dispel social and global misconceptions.

Bageshwar Dham chief Dhirendra Krishna Shastri praised the initiative and expressed gratitude for establishing the World Peace Centre, calling it a unifying effort for the cause of Sanatan Dharma. He also announced that Acharya Lokesh Muni will now be honoured as Acharya Lokesh Muni Sanatani.

Shastri highlighted the need for "Hindutva Intelligence" (HI) alongside Artificial Intelligence (AI) in modern times. He said Dharma can unite the country, prevent violence, avert global conflicts, and guide humanity towards non-violence and peace. "It is Dharma that can save the world from a Third World War and lead people to peaceful paths," he added.

The initiative is expected to strengthen global peace efforts while promoting dialogue, non-violence, and spiritual unity across nations and societies.

## Sanjay Raut lambasts Shinde over Mumbai mayoral Post

**MUMBAI**

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Wednesday criticized Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde regarding the Mumbai mayoral post. He said Shinde would have to convince senior BJP leaders to secure the post for Shiv Sena, calling the situation "insulting" for those displaying Balasaheb Thackeray's photo yet seeking approval from BJP leaders in Delhi.

The BJP-Sena alliance swept the BMC elections, with BJP winning 89 of 227 seats, aiming for the mayoral post, while Shinde wants to maintain Shiv Sena's legacy in India's richest municipal

corporation. Raut also questioned Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' presence at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, saying the agreements signed there could have been done in Mumbai and urged disclosure of travel costs to taxpayers.

He added that the chief ministers' Davos visits are unnecessary from an Indian perspective, calling them "ridiculous" and urging transparency in expenditures. Regarding two UBT corporators in Kalyan-Dombivli being unreachable, Raut said legal action, including disqualification proceedings, is underway.

The BMC election results favored the BJP-Sena alliance, which won 118 seats, while Shiv Sena (UBT) secured 65 seats and MNS six in Mumbai. In Kalyan-Dombivli, Mahayuti won 103 of 122 seats; BJP took 50 and Shinde's Shiv Sena 53, while Shiv Sena (UBT) won 11 and MNS five seats.

Meanwhile, former BMC Mayor Kishori Pednekar was elected as the leader of Shiv Sena (UBT) corporators after defeating Rupal Kusale in Ward No. 199.

## Colonel Westlake bids farewell as UK naval advisor

**NEW DELHI**

The British High Commission in India on Wednesday marked the end of Royal Marines Colonel Simon Westlake's tenure as UK Naval Advisor to India, recognising his contributions to strengthening naval cooperation between the two countries. Colonel Westlake had taken charge in January 2024 from Captain Ian Lynn and previously served as Air Advisor and UK Defence Attache to the Caribbean and Ghana.

In an X post, the Defence Section of the British High Commission said, "As Royal Marines Col Simon Westlake's chapter as UK Naval Advisor to India comes to a close, we salute his service and steady hand at the helm." The post announced that Captain Daniel Peskett will take over as the new Naval Advisor, a move expected to further enhance maritime collaboration and defence ties. "With Captain Daniel Peskett taking over, we look ahead with confidence and renewed energy. Fair winds and following seas!" it added.

The transition comes amid India-UK defence cooperation under the India-UK Vision 2035, endorsed last year by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer. The Vision includes a 10-year Defence Industrial Roadmap, strategic coordination via upgraded 2+2 dialogues, advanced technology collaboration, and joint military exercises. India will also serve as a regional logistics hub for UK forces, and both sides will work on counterterrorism, cyber threats, and irregular migration, while enhancing cyber resilience and protecting critical infrastructure.

Additionally, maritime cooperation will be strengthened under the Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative, including the creation of a Regional Maritime Security Centre of Excellence. Colonel Westlake's tenure is seen as a bridge in deepening UK-India naval ties, and Captain Peskett's appointment is expected to continue this trajectory of cooperation and strategic partnership.

## Telangana panchayat authorities booked over dog culling

**RANGAREDDY**

Telangana Police on Wednesday registered a case against the Gram Panchayat of Yacharam village in Rangareddy district for allegedly killing about 100 stray dogs.

The case followed a complaint filed by the Stay Animal Foundation, which named the village sarpanch, ward members, and panchayat secretary. Authorities have initiated an investigation, and further inquiry is underway to verify the allegations.

Earlier this month, a similar case emerged in Shayampet and Arepally villages, where police registered an FIR against nine people, including the Shayampet sarpanch, for allegedly killing 300 stray dogs. According to the FIR, the sarpanch's staff had reportedly hired two individuals to kill the animals using poisonous injections. The case was filed under Section 11(1)(a)(l) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and BNS 325 for mischief by killing or maiming animals.

P Ranjith Rao, Circle Inspector at Shayampet Police Station, said many residents reported dog bites and skin infections. Post-mortem examinations of the deceased animals were conducted at the Regional Forensic Science Laboratory (RFSL).

Authorities stated that these actions underscore the need for strict enforcement of animal protection laws. The investigation aims to establish the facts, ensure accountability, and prevent such incidents in the future.

AI IN MED

# *AI in healthcare is a necessity: Union Min*

**NEW DELHI**

Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel on Wednesday launched an online training programme on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in medical education, developed by the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS).

The programme aims to equip around 50,000 doctors with AI skills to improve clinical practice, diagnostics, research, and teaching across the country.

Patel noted that over 42,000 doctors have already registered for the initiative. She said AI is a necessity in healthcare, helping doctors enhance their capabilities, bridge staff shortages, and manage growing patient

needs. She stressed that AI should be used responsibly, ethically, and accessibly, complementing doctors' work rather than replacing them.

The Minister highlighted that in a country facing a high burden of non-communicable diseases and tuberculosis, AI can support proactive and preventive healthcare, shifting focus from reactive treatments. She praised NBEMS for conceptualising the programme and promoting the integration of technology into medical education and healthcare delivery.

Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava described the initiative as an important step in strengthening medical education and building capacity among doctors nationwide. She added that such programmes encourage the responsible adoption of emerging technologies, improve healthcare delivery, and advance India's vision of digital health.

Dr Abhijat Sheth, President of NBEMS, said the programme demonstrates the institution's commitment to modernising medical education and empowering doctors. He expressed confidence that the training would improve doctors' skills, enhance healthcare outcomes, and strengthen the country's medical system.

# Delhi HC directs timely land provision for judicial housing

**NEW DELHI**

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued directions to ensure timely provision of land for residential accommodation of judicial officers at CBD Shahdara and Rohini. The order followed a writ petition filed by Sahil A. Garg Narwarna.

A Division Bench, comprising Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia, took note of an affidavit from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), which confirmed approval of a plot at CBD Shahdara for staff quarters. A fresh possession letter was issued on January 8, 2026, in favour of the Law Department. The Bench directed that upon taking possession,

the Law Department and Public Works Department (PWD) must fence the land to prevent encroachment and ensure security.

The Court also noted that the current land use at CBD Shahdara is commercial and must be converted to residential. Authorities were asked to complete the land-use change within three months. All relevant departments and ministries have been asked to comply.

Regarding judicial housing in Rohini, two plots were identified at Village Shahbad, Daulatpur, after a site inspection on October 22, 2025. The DDA has issued an allotment letter for a larger plot adjacent to existing judicial quarters. The Bench directed the concerned authorities to take possession within eight weeks and ensure budgetary arrangements are in place.

The DDA and GNCTD must file a status report on progress at both Shahdara and Rohini. The matter will be reviewed next on April 6, 2026.

# Eyes on the stars, feet on the ground...

*Continued from page 1*

After three decades with NASA, astronaut Sunita Williams has officially retired, closing a career that blended grit, record-breaking endurance and quiet trailblazing. Her career also involves commanding the International Space Station to running a marathon in orbit.

The announcement of her retirement comes as Williams (60), is visiting India, where she addressed an interactive session at the American Centre on Tuesday, reflecting on a journey that took her from Earth's surface to some of the longest and most demanding missions aboard the International Space Station.

At the event, titled "Eyes on the Stars, Feet on the Ground," Williams spoke about one of the toughest phases of her career, an eight-day mission that unexpectedly stretched into more than nine months in space after technical problems on Boeing's Starliner spacecraft. What was meant to be routine became a defining test of resilience as she and her crewmates adapted to an extended stay in orbit.

## A LEGACY OF 27 YEARS

NASA formally confirmed her retirement in a statement issued on January 20. "After 27 years of service, NASA astronaut Suni Williams retired from the agency, effective Dec. 27, 2025. Williams completed three missions aboard the International Space Station, setting numerous human spaceflight records throughout her career," the agency said.

"Suni Williams has been a trailblazer in human spaceflight, shaping the future of exploration through her leadership aboard the space station and paving the way for commercial missions to low Earth orbit," NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman said. "Her work advancing science and technology has laid the foundation for Artemis missions to the Moon and advancing toward Mars, and her extraordinary achievements will continue to inspire generations to dream big and push the boundaries of what's possible," he added.

Born on September 19, 1965, in Euclid, Ohio, to a Gujarati father, Deepak Pandya, from Jhulasan in Gujarat's Mehsana district, and a Slovenian mother, Ursuline Bonnie Pandya, Williams has long been a source of pride across continents.

Over the course of her career, she logged 608 cumulative days in space, second among NASA astronauts, and completed nine spacewalks totalling 62 hours and six minutes, the most by any woman and the fourth-highest overall.

## 'SPACE, SECOND HOME'

Williams herself described space as home. "Anyone who knows me knows that space is my absolute favourite place to be," she said. "It's been an incredible honour to have served in the Astronaut Office and have had the opportunity to fly in space three times. I had an amazing 27-year career at NASA, and that is mainly because of all the wonderful love and support I've received from my colleagues."

## CAREER MILESTONES

Her career milestones span multiple eras of spaceflight—from launching aboard space shuttle Discovery in 2006, to commanding the space station, to flying on both Boeing and SpaceX spacecraft. A retired US Navy captain, Williams is also an accomplished pilot with more than 4,000 flight hours across 40 aircraft.

Reflecting on what lies ahead, she said the space station and the science conducted there have made future exploration possible. "I hope the foundation we set has made these bold steps a little easier. I am super excited for NASA and its partner agencies as we take these next steps, and I can't wait to watch the agency make history."

## A NAVAL PILOT, AN ASTRONAUT

Before frequently commuting to space, Williams built her career in the US Navy, flying helicopter missions during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. She later became a test pilot, a role that demands precision, calm decision-making, and an ability to handle experimental aircraft, all qualities that later defined her career as a prominent astronaut. In 1998, Williams was selected as a Nasa astronaut, and joined the space agency at a time when the ISS was still taking shape. Astronauts then were not just scientists but builders, expected to assemble and maintain a complex laboratory while living inside it.

## RECORD TIME IN ORBIT

Across multiple missions, Williams spent more than 320 cumulative days in space, making her one of Nasa's most experienced long-duration astronauts. Williams has also spent 608 days in space across her career, putting her second on the list of cumulative time in space by a Nasa astronaut. Her last mission saw her get stuck aboard the ISS.

The silver lining was that she saw her name climb the ranks on the list of American astronauts with the longest single spaceflight. She ranks sixth, tied with Butch Wilmore, who too was stuck in space along with Williams for a total of 286 days.

Williams' missions focused heavily on research into how the human body adapts to microgravity, including bone density loss, muscle weakening, balance disorders, and cardiovascular changes.

This work became increasingly important as space agencies began planning missions beyond low Earth orbit, including long stays on the Moon and eventual journeys to Mars.

## A SPACEWALKER

Williams is also remembered for her extensive work outside the ISS. She completed nine spacewalks throughout her career, spending more than 60 hours in the vacuum of space. It's the most amount of time a woman has spent spacewalking, and ranks fourth in the all-time cumulative spacewalk duration in Nasa's history. These missions involved installing new power systems, repairing cooling lines, and upgrading station hardware. Williams' performance during these operations made her a trusted choice for complex repairs.

## COMMANDER WILLIAMS

In 2012, Williams became the commander of the ISS, placing her in charge of daily station operations and crew safety. The role required coordination with mission control centres in the US, Russia, Europe, and Japan, often across different time zones and languages. Her command came during a period when the ISS was evolving into a fully operational research platform, hosting hundreds of experiments simultaneously. As Sunita Williams steps away from active service, she leaves behind more than flight records. Her career stands as a testament to the notion that space exploration is not just about rockets and technology. It's also about people who can adapt, endure, and lead far from Earth.

### Sunita Williams' Indian roots

Sunita Williams's father was a neuroanatomist born in Jhulasan, in Mehsana District, Gujarat, but later migrated to the US and married Bonnie Pandya, a Slovenian. Born in Euclid, Ohio, she considers Needham, Massachusetts to be her hometown. Willians and her husband, Michael, enjoy hanging out with their dogs, working out, working on houses, cars, aeroplanes, hiking and camping. The Indian-Slovenian descent consistently promoted STEM fields, frequently carrying items of personal significance to her heritage into space, such as a copy of the Bhagavad Gita and a Ganesha idol.

### 'Space, an absolute favourite place to be'

"Anyone who knows me knows that space is my absolute favourite place to be," said Sunita Williams. "It's been an incredible honour to have served in the Astronaut Office and have had the opportunity to fly in space three times. I had an amazing 27-year career at NASA, and that is mainly because of all the wonderful love and support I've received from my colleagues. The International Space Station, the people, the engineering, and the science are truly awe-inspiring and have made the next steps of exploration to the Moon and Mars possible. I hope the foundation we set has made these bold steps a little easier. I am super excited for NASA and its partner agencies as we take these next steps, and I can't wait to watch the agency make history," she was quoted by NASA.

# Court Ban Ignored As Trees Felled On Lahore Campus

**LAHORE**

Despite a clear Lahore High Court order banning tree cutting, dozens of trees were reportedly felled at Punjab University, raising public anger and student criticism online. The controversy began after the western boundary wall near the Shaikh Zayed Islamic Centre partially collapsed following heavy rain and wind. The university's engineering department reportedly recommended removing damaged trees, and a private contractor began cutting them over the weekend when the campus was mostly empty.

The Shajar Dost Community alleged that no public tender was advertised for the tree-cutting contract and that nearly 60 trees, including fruit-bearing mango and jambolan varieties, were removed unlawfully. The contract, reportedly worth PKR 550,000, was allegedly awarded without notifying the auction committee. Students and environmental activists quickly shared videos and images online, accusing the university of ignoring the court order and harming green cover in the city.

## SU DO KU

**Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?**

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Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

**Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.**

# Former South Korean PM Sentenced Over Insurrection

**SEOUL**

South Korea's former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo was sentenced to 23 years in prison on Wednesday for his role in an insurrection linked to former President Yoon Suk Yeol's brief imposition of martial law on December 3, 2024. The Seoul Central District Court ruled this was the first case confirming the decree as an insurrection. Han's punishment exceeded the 15 years requested by special counsel Cho Eun-suk's team.

The court said Han helped organize the insurrection by urging Yoon to convene a Cabinet meeting before issuing the martial law decree. He did not oppose the decree during the meeting and allegedly encouraged Interior Minister Lee Sang-min to cut power and water to media critical of the administration. The judge emphasized that Han neglected his constitutional duties and responsibilities as a prime minister, choosing instead to participate in the insurrection.

South Korea's ex-Prime Minister Han Duck-soo received a long prison sentence for his insurrection role

Han also signed a revised proclamation after the decree was lifted to make it appear legitimate and lied under oath at the Constitutional Court. He is the first member of Yoon's Cabinet to be sentenced. Han denied the allegations, claiming he knew nothing about the martial law plans beyond the decree itself and never supported them.

The ruling could affect Yoon's own trial, which ended last week with prosecutors seeking the death penalty. Yoon's verdict is expected on February 19. Under South Korea's Constitution, an insurrection is defined as any act aimed at overthrowing the state or subverting the Constitution, whether through a riot or by attempting to remove authority over part or all of the country.

# Japanese Court Sentences Abe's Killer To Life

**TOKYO**

A Japanese court on Wednesday sentenced Tetsuya Yamagami, 45, to life in prison for assassinating former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2022. The Nara District Court described the attack, carried out using a homemade gun, as "vile and extremely vicious." Prosecutors had requested life imprisonment, which the court upheld.

Yamagami admitted shooting Abe while he gave a speech in Nara. His defence asked for a shorter term of 20 years, claiming Yamagami's difficult upbringing and harm caused by the Unification Church influenced his actions. Yamagami said his family suffered financially due to his mother's 100 million yen donations to the religious group and believed Abe was connected to the church's political influence. The court found him guilty of murder and violating Japan's Firearms and Swords Control Law, despite the defence arguing that his homemade gun was not covered under the law.

The assassination drew national attention to the Unification Church's fundraising practices. Following public concern, the Japanese government investigated, leading to a Tokyo court order to dissolve the church and remove its tax benefits. Laws regulating manipulative fundraising were also enacted in 2022 to protect members' children.

Shinzo Abe, Japan's longest-serving prime minister, died at 67 after being shot.

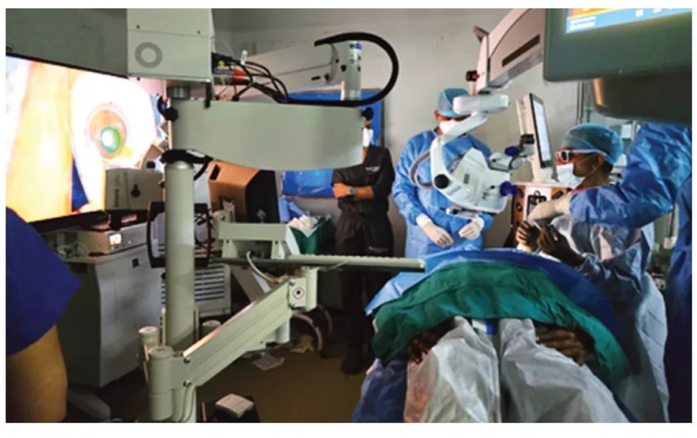
**EYE ROBOT**

# *China Develops Robot For Precise Eye Surgery*

**BEIJING**

Chinese researchers have developed an autonomous robot capable of performing delicate eye injections with high precision and safety. The system was created by the Institute of Automation under the Chinese Academy of Sciences to treat retinal diseases.

In a study published in Science Robotics, the robot successfully completed subretinal and intravascular injections in animal tests with 100% accuracy. Eye surgery is difficult because of the tiny, soft structures of the organ. The robot uses advanced algorithms for 3D spatial perception, precise positioning, and trajectory control to guide its robotic arm.



Tests on eyeball models, ex vivo pig eyes, and live animals showed the robot reduced positioning errors by nearly 80% compared to manual surgery. Even against surgeon-controlled robotic surgery, errors dropped by about 55%, highlighting improved safety and consistency. Researchers said the system could shorten training periods for surgeons and make complex surgeries possible in remote or extreme locations without specialist doctors.

In November 2025, a Chinese medical team successfully performed a remote robotic retinal injection using a 5G-connected robot. The surgery took place over 4,000 kilometers apart, with a robot in Urumqi positioning the needle while surgeons in Guangzhou guided it to the retina and injected medication. The operation took less than seven minutes, with the network stable and the robot responding smoothly.

This advancement marks a major step in combining robotics and telemedicine to improve surgical accuracy, expand access to eye care, and reduce risks in microsurgeries. Experts believe such autonomous systems could revolutionize ophthalmology worldwide, bridging gaps between urban hospitals and remote regions while ensuring safer and faster treatments.

## QUICK READ

### NSEIX, FIDC Join Hands for NBFC Funding

**New Delhi**
NSE International Exchange, a wholly owned arm of the National Stock Exchange, on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding with the Finance Industry Development Council. The agreement aims to help non-banking financial companies raise funds through the GIFT IFSC platform. FIDC is a self-regulatory body for NBFCs. The partnership will support listing of debt and other instruments on NSEIX and offer new debt and equity products to meet long-term funding needs.

### OnePlus India Rejects Shutdown Rumours Online

**New Delhi**
OnePlus India on Wednesday denied reports claiming it is shutting down operations in the country. The company said such reports are false and based on online misinformation. OnePlus India CEO Robin Liu said the firm is operating as usual and will continue its business normally. He urged people to rely only on official sources before sharing unverified claims. The clarification comes at a time when smartphone companies in India are facing strong competition and closer scrutiny of partnerships.

### Rupee Falls Sharply Past 91.50 Per Dollar

**Mumbai**
The rupee fell 61 paise to a record low of 91.58 against the US dollar on Wednesday. Weak global mood and steady foreign fund selling hurt the currency. Traders said global tensions and tariff worries made investors cautious. A fall in local shares added pressure. The rupee opened at 91.05 and slid sharply during trade. Stocks declined and foreign investors sold shares worth Rs 2,938 crore, while oil and the dollar eased.

# Markets Expect Greenland Deal After Davos, Says Ajay Bagga

Market analyst Ajay Bagga says investors remain calm, expecting negotiations over Greenland tensions to limit fallout for global markets

**MUMBAI**

Market expert Ajay Bagga said global investors are largely pricing in a deal on Greenland after the World Economic Forum summit ends. He said recent tensions between the United States and Europe have raised tariff worries and short term "sell America" trades, but the impact remains limited. According to Bagga, most investors believe former US President Donald Trump will return from Davos with a negotiated arrangement rather than an escalation.

Bagga explained that markets expect the United States to seek limited strategic access, such as military bases, while avoiding a wider conflict. He added that investors feel Europe can slow any sharp rise in tensions through firm talks. As a result, bond markets are not expecting lasting pressure on US Treasury yields.

The Greenland issue intensified in January 2026 when Trump renewed efforts to acquire the territory from Denmark. This move added uncertainty to global markets and revived questions about long standing alliances. Bagga said Europe is now under pressure to raise defence spending and reduce security dependence on Washington.

He also noted that Europe may speed up free trade agreements with other regions to cut reliance on the US. Highlighting strong ties, Bagga said US and European trade totals about 1.5 trillion dollars, with companies holding nearly 4.7 trillion dollars in shared assets.

Bagga warned that decades of global order are being tested, pointing to unusual political messaging and maps. Still, he said markets expect limits to these actions. He added that de dollarisation may grow slowly, but the dollar bonds remain dominant.

Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw rejected the IMF chief's view placing India in a second tier of AI economies, saying India ranks among global leaders. Speaking at Davos, he cited Stanford rankings on AI readiness and said India is advancing across applications, models, chips, infrastructure and energy, while building an independent AI path and focusing on practical, service-driven AI deployment.

# Cabinet Clears Equity Boost For SIDBI Support

**NEW DELHI**

**Rs 5,000 crore equity infusion aims to strengthen SIDBI and expand affordable credit access for millions of small businesses nationwide**

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a major equity support package of Rs 5,000 crore for the Small Industries Development Bank of India to strengthen lending to micro, small and medium enterprises. The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is aimed at improving credit flow to small businesses across the country.

According to the government, the equity will be infused by the Department of Financial Services in three phases. An amount of Rs 3,000 crore will be provided in the 2025-26 financial year, followed by Rs 1,000 crore each in the next two years. This phased support will help SIDBI maintain a strong capital base while expanding operations.

The Finance Ministry said the additional capital will allow SIDBI to raise funds at competitive rates from the market. This, in turn, is expected to increase affordable loans for MSMEs operating in manufacturing, services and emerging sectors.

With improved access to finance, the number of MSMEs supported by SIDBI is projected to rise from 76.26 lakh to nearly 102 lakh by the end of the 2028 financial year. Officials said about 25.74 lakh new enterprises are likely to benefit during this period.

The move is also expected to have a positive impact on employment. Based on existing trends, the expansion of MSME credit could help generate around 1.12 crore new jobs nationwide.

The government said the equity support will also prepare SIDBI for future needs, including digital lending platforms, collateral free credit products and venture debt for startups. Maintaining adequate capital will ensure the bank remains stable even under stress conditions. The decision underlines the government's focus on strengthening MSMEs for sustainable growth.

## Netflix Ad Revenue Surges Past $1.5 Billion Milestone

**LOS GATOS**

Streaming giant Netflix reported ad revenue exceeding $1.5 billion in 2025, more than doubling its advertising business in just three years since launching ads on its platform. The company revealed its advertising earnings for the first time in its shareholder letter on January 21, 2026, showing a 2.5-fold increase over 2024. Netflix expects ad revenue to double again in 2026, signaling its strong focus on advertising growth. Netflix forecast total revenue of $50.7 billion to $51.7 billion for 2026, reflecting 12% to 14% year-on-year growth. Advertising was a major driver of its strong fourth-quarter performance, contributing to revenue of $12.1 billion, up 18% year-on-year. Growth was also supported by membership gains and higher subscription pricing. For the full year, Netflix posted revenue of $45.2 billion and an operating margin of 29.5%, meeting or exceeding all targets. In 2025, Netflix tested AI tools to help advertisers create customised campaigns linked to its intellectual property, introducing automated workflows and AI-driven planning for ad concepts.

*India's inclusive artificial intelligence ambitions took centre stage ahead of the India-AI Impact Summit 2026.*

## Inclusive AI Vision Highlighted At India AI Impact Pre-Event

**NEW DELHI**

AI4India, along with Intel India, BharatGen and IHFC of IIT Delhi, will host the official pre-event for the India-AI Impact Summit 2026 on January 23 at IIT Delhi's Research and Innovation Park. The event is themed "Building Inclusive AI for India and the World" and will focus on using technology to solve real social challenges.

Organisers said the day-long programme aims to promote responsible, inclusive and scalable AI solutions suited to India's diverse needs. It will also encourage cooperation between government, industry, researchers and startups.

The pre-event will feature keynote addresses and panel discussions with over 30 speakers from policy, academia and industry. Notable participants include AI4India co-founder Shashi Shekhar Vempati, IIT Delhi Director Rangan Banerjee, Intel India President Gokul Subramaniam and BharatGen CEO Rishi Bal.

A major highlight will be the launch of a detailed report on the future of employability in the age of AI. The study offers guidance for students, institutions and industry on preparing for AI-driven workplaces.

An innovation expo will showcase 25 emerging AI startups working on solutions for healthcare, education, climate resilience and smart governance. These startups will present technologies designed for large-scale public impact.

AI4India co-founder Alok Agrawal said the platform highlights Indian-built AI solutions that benefit society. Intel's Gokul Subramaniam said partnerships are vital for developing affordable AI to address population-scale challenges.

IHFC IIT Delhi will support promising startups with funding of up to Rs 2 crore. The event is backed by NextGen Cloud Technologies and the Centre of Policy Research and Governance, strengthening India's growing AI ecosystem.

## Budget 2026 Likely To Maintain Fiscal Deficit Steady

**NEW DELHI**

The upcoming Union Budget 2026 is expected to maintain the fiscal deficit at 4.4 per cent of GDP, the same as FY26, according to a report by Nuvama. The Finance Minister is unlikely to pursue further fiscal consolidation, even as the Indian economy shows early signs of recovery.

The report noted that while tax cuts in 2025 have boosted consumption in certain areas, broader spending cuts to meet FY26 targets have limited widespread benefits. For FY27, monetary easing measures need to be complemented with fiscal support, but a full-fledged fiscal expansion is unlikely. Instead, the government may pause further consolidation to sustain growth momentum.

To strengthen investment, the report suggested relying on large disinvestments and encouraging public sector undertakings to increase capital expenditure, which has been slow in recent years. Measures such as deregulation, credit-guarantee schemes, and steps to improve the ease of doing business may also feature in the budget. A credit guarantee scheme for microfinance institutions to support low-income borrowers is under consideration.

Nuvama highlighted that while higher development spending and capex can help, corporate earnings may continue to face pressures, and external risks remain a concern. Tweaks to capital gains taxes could influence near-term market sentiment.

The report added that FY26 focused on consumption via tax rationalisation, while FY27 is likely to emphasize investment support through deregulation. Sectors expected to receive attention include semiconductors, AI, robotics, and exports. Overall, the FY27 budget is projected to support growth modestly, with recovery remaining gradual but steady.

## Universities Must Drive Innovation And Entrepreneurship Nationwide

**BENGALURU**

Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot on Wednesday urged universities to actively promote innovations that address challenges in rural development, healthcare, education, environment, and digital inclusion.

Inaugurating the two-day South Zone Vice Chancellors' Conference-2026 at Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences (RUAS), jointly organised by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), he said India can move from a knowledge-based economy to an innovation-driven global leader only if universities become centres of entrepreneurship. He stressed exposing youth to the latest technologies to enhance skills, encourage self-employment, and contribute to national development.

Highlighting South India's leadership in education, science, and technology, the Governor cited Bengaluru as a model where education, research, and industry collaborations create global-level innovations. He called for expanding this model nationwide. Conference discussions will focus on fostering entrepreneurial thinking, establishing incubation and innovation centres, and strengthening university-industry partnerships.

Gehlot said entrepreneurship is not just for economic growth but also drives social change, sustainable development, and inclusive progress. He emphasised higher education institutions should act as hubs of innovation, leadership, and nation-building. With guidance, resources, and opportunities, students' ideas can lead to self-reliance, employment generation, and societal benefits. He also lauded RUAS for its modern infrastructure, interdisciplinary approach, research initiatives, innovative teaching methods, and industry linkages, which help students grow intellectually and personally. RUAS Vice Chancellor Dr. Kuldeep Kumar Raina said around 120 Vice Chancellors attended in person, while 100 joined online. AIU President Prof. Vinay Kumar Pathak urged institutions to equip students with knowledge of innovation to become entrepreneurs, noting that conference resolutions would be submitted to the government for implementation.

## Discoms Must Be Financially Strong For Better Services

**NEW DELHI**

Power Minister Manohar Lal on Wednesday said that India's power sector is set to grow enormously, and strong, financially empowered Discoms are essential for better services and consumer satisfaction.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the Electricity Distribution Industry Conference (EDICON: 2026), Lal highlighted that a thriving power sector is critical to support the country's growing economy. He urged State Electricity Regulatory Commissions to adopt cost-reflective tariffs while ensuring targeted subsidies for needy consumers, as per the Electricity Act.

The minister also released the first annual report of the All India Discoms Association (AIDA), which provides an overview of efforts by distribution companies to enhance supply reliability, operational efficiency, and measures taken by the Ministry of Power and CERC to address sector challenges. During the event, Lal awarded 12 Discoms across six categories, representing states including Gujarat, Odisha, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. Significantly, the power distribution sector has reported a rare turnaround, with distribution companies and power departments posting a combined net profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 2,701 crore in FY2024-25. This marks a sharp improvement from a loss of Rs 25,553 crore in FY2023-24 and a massive Rs 67,962 crore loss in FY2013-14.

Since the unbundling and corporatisation of State Electricity Boards, Discoms had largely remained unprofitable, making this milestone historic. The minister described the achievement as the start of a new chapter for India's power distribution system, crediting government reforms aimed at improving efficiency, financial health, and service quality of utilities. The development signals a positive outlook for India's energy sector and enhanced consumer experience in the coming years.

**GOLD RALLY**

## *Gold Hits Record Highs In Domestic Markets*

**NEW DELHI**

Gold futures surged to a record high in domestic and global markets on Wednesday, driven by strong safe haven demand amid rising global uncertainty.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold futures for February delivery jumped by Rs 7,774 to hit an all time high of Rs 1,58,339 per 10 grams, marking the third straight session of gains. Prices have risen sharply over the past three trading days, climbing by Rs 15,822, or over 11 per cent, since January 16.

Silver also continued its upward move and touched a fresh record on the exchange. Silver futures for March delivery surged by Rs 11,849 to Rs 3,35,521 per kilogram, reflecting strong buying interest in precious metals.

Market experts said investors are shifting money away from risky assets as global trade tensions and geopolitical worries increase. Rahul Kalantri of Mehta Equities said the rally in gold and silver is supported by weakness in global equity markets and growing demand for safety.

In overseas markets, gold futures on the Comex crossed the USD 4,800 per ounce level for the first time. February gold contracts rose to around USD 4,880 per ounce, while silver traded close to record highs.

Analysts said rupee weakness has made gold imports costlier, adding to domestic price gains. Expectations of future interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve, falling bond yields and ongoing geopolitical tensions are further supporting the rally in bullion prices.

With uncertainty persisting, experts expect demand for gold and silver to remain firm in the near term, keeping prices elevated across domestic and international markets in coming sessions despite short term volatility risks ahead.

# Power's Peril: A Deep Dive into Authority, Abuse, and Accountability in the Workplace

In the bustling heart of Bengaluru, a high-ranking police official's career came to a screeching halt when a disturbing video surfaced online. The footage, which quickly spread across social media platforms, allegedly captured the officer in compromising situations with women inside his office, while in uniform. This incident not only sparked widespread outrage but also highlighted deeper issues within public institutions. The state government responded swiftly, issuing a suspension order that cited behavior unbecoming of a public servant, one that had brought significant embarrassment to the administration. An inquiry was launched to investigate potential violations of conduct rules, with the officer barred from leaving headquarters without permission and entitled only to standard allowances during this period.

This wasn't the officer's first brush with controversy. Earlier scrutiny had arisen from connections to a gold smuggling case involving a family member, adding layers to the unfolding drama. Audio clips and additional videos emerged, intensifying questions about professional ethics in government offices. The home minister emphasized the government's rapid action, warning that further steps, including possible dismissal, could follow the probe. He described such events as a stain on the police force's reputation, insisting that no level of seniority would shield wrongdoers. The episode left the public reeling, underscoring a commitment to upholding discipline and trust in state institutions amid national scrutiny.

This case serves as a stark reminder of how power, when misused, can erode the foundations of organizations. It echoes broader patterns seen in workplaces everywhere—subtle intimidations, unchecked privileges, and systemic failures that allow misconduct to fester. Drawing from real-world insights, this feature explores how authority can morph into something destructive, examining themes like intimidation, impunity, and the silent enablers that perpetuate harm. Through these lenses, we uncover the human toll and pathways to reform, aiming to foster healthier, more equitable environments.

## How Power Is Quietly Weaponized in Modern Workplaces

In many offices, the line between strong leadership and subtle coercion blurs, creating environments where employees feel constantly on edge. This form of intimidation often manifests through exclusion from key discussions, excessive micromanagement, or withholding critical information needed for success. Such tactics, though not always overt, chip away at morale and productivity, fostering a culture where fear replaces collaboration.

Consider how senior staff might foster hostile competition, pitting team members against each other to maintain control. This can lead to backstabbing and a fractured team dynamic, where trust evaporates. Psychological pressure builds when bosses use veiled threats or constant criticism, making workers doubt their abilities and hesitate to voice ideas. Research shows these behaviors are common in hierarchical settings, where power imbalances allow them to thrive unchecked.

To combat this, organizations can implement clear guidelines on respectful communication and regular feedback sessions. Employees facing such issues should document incidents and seek support from HR or trusted allies. Ultimately, recognizing these subtle signs early can prevent escalation, turning potential toxicity into opportunities for growth.

Signs of subtle bullying: Repeated exclusion from meetings, unfair workload distribution, or public humiliation disguised as "feedback."

Impact on individuals: Increased stress, reduced self-esteem, and higher burnout rates.

Organizational fallout: Lower innovation as employees withdraw from contributing ideas. By addressing these quietly weaponized power dynamics, workplaces can shift toward inclusivity, where authority inspires rather than intimidates.



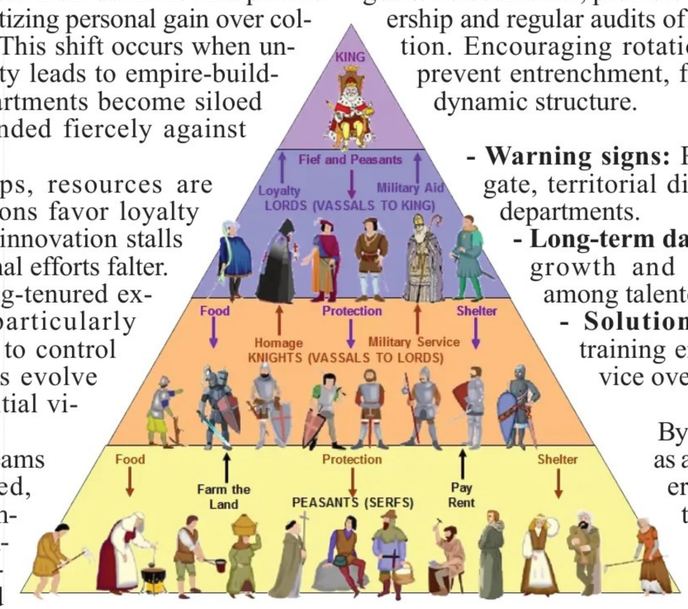


## From Leadership to Lordship:
### When Higher Positions Turn Into Personal Fiefdoms

Some leaders treat their domains like private kingdoms, prioritizing personal gain over collective success. This shift occurs when unchecked authority leads to empire-building, where departments become siloed territories defended fiercely against collaboration.

In such setups, resources are hoarded, decisions favor loyalty over merit, and innovation stalls as cross-functional efforts falter. Founders or long-tenured executives are particularly prone, clinging to control as organizations evolve beyond their initial vision.

The result? Teams feel undervalued, with morale plummeting as personal agendas overshadow shared goals. To counteract, promote distributed leadership and regular audits of resource allocation. Encouraging rotation of roles can prevent entrenchment, fostering a more dynamic structure.




- **Warning signs:** Refusal to delegate, territorial disputes between departments.
- **Long-term damage:** Stagnant growth and high turnover among talented staff.
- **Solutions:** Leadership training emphasizing service over dominance.

By reframing power as a tool for empowerment, organizations can dismantle these fiefdoms and build resilient teams.

## Promotions or Payoffs? How Favoritism and Nepotism Corrode Workplace Morale

When advancements hinge on connections rather than competence, resentment brews. Favoritism—whether through family ties or friendships—undermines fairness, leading to unqualified individuals in key roles and demotivated teams. Employees notice when relatives receive swift promotions or leniency on performance, eroding trust in leadership. This not only stifles diversity but also hampers productivity as skilled workers disengage or leave.

Anti-nepotism policies, transparent hiring processes, and merit-based evaluations are vital fixes. Regular audits of promotion patterns can reveal biases, while anonymous feedback channels empower voices.

- **Distinctions:** Nepotism favors kin; favoritism extends to friends.
- **Effects on morale:** Increased cynicism and reduced collaboration.

- **Preventive measures:** Clear criteria for advancements and conflict-of-interest disclosures.

Restoring equity requires vigilance, ensuring opportunities reflect effort and ability, not affiliations.

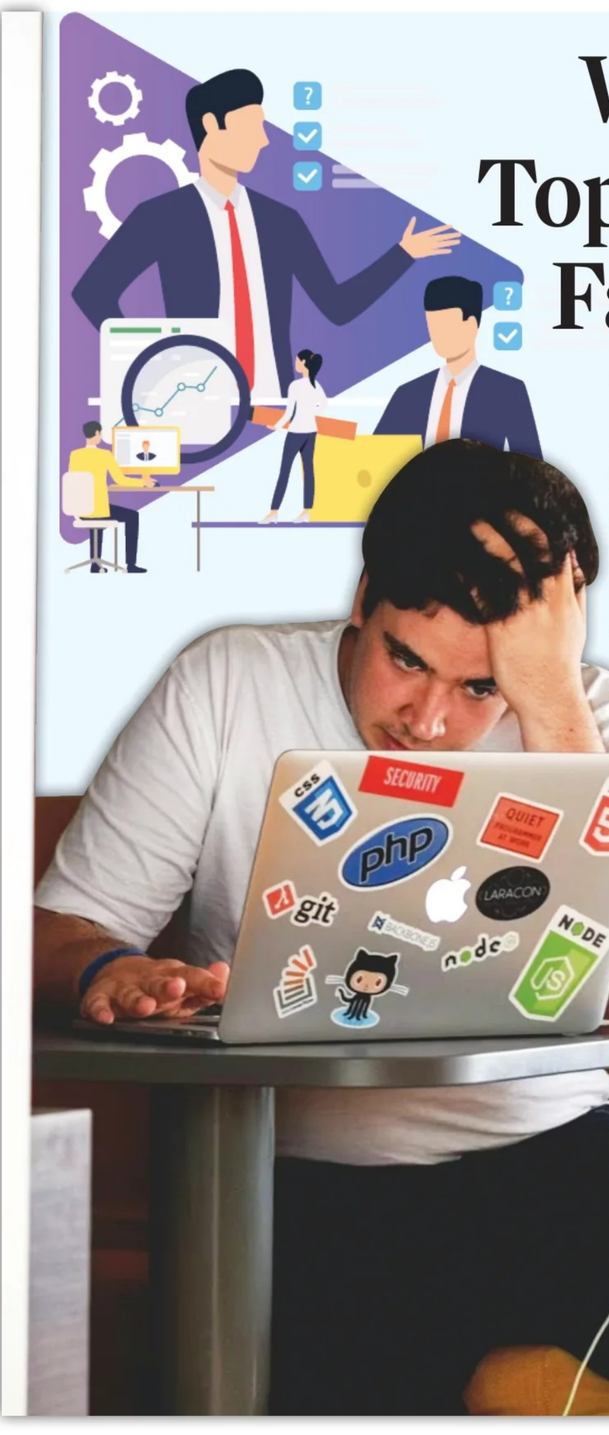
## Whistleblowers at Risk: The High Cost of Speaking Against Workplace Corruption

Those who expose wrongdoing often pay dearly, facing retaliation like isolation, demotion, or job loss. This fear deters reporting, allowing corruption to persist.

Whistleblowers endure emotional strain, career setbacks, and social stigma, despite legal protections. Their actions, driven by integrity, highlight systemic flaws but at personal expense. Strengthening safeguards, such as anonymous hotlines and anti-retaliation enforcement, can encourage speaking up. Recognizing their contributions publicly shifts perceptions from traitors to heroes.

- **Common risks:** Professional ostracism and psychological stress.
- **Broader impact:** Unchecked fraud damages organizations financially.
- **Support strategies:** Legal aid and counseling for reporters.

Valuing these courageous acts builds ethical cultures where truth prevails over silence.



## Why Misconduct by Top Executives Rarely Faces Consequences

High-level leaders often seem insulated from accountability, even when their actions warrant scrutiny. This phenomenon stems from a mix of elite networks, fear of disrupting the status quo, and inadequate enforcement mechanisms. When executives engage in wrongdoing, companies may opt for quiet settlements or internal wrist-slaps, prioritizing stability over justice.

One reason is the perception that punishing top brass could harm the organization's reputation or finances more than the misconduct itself. Prosecutors and boards hesitate, citing the complexity of proving intent or the risk of lengthy legal battles. This creates a cycle where lower-level staff bear the brunt of rules, while seniors operate with impunity.

Case examples illustrate how this plays out: Firms facing scandals often see executives depart with golden parachutes, leaving employees and shareholders to suffer the fallout. To break this, stronger oversight from independent boards and whistleblower protections are essential. Encouraging a culture where no one is above the law starts at the top, with transparent policies that apply universally.

**Barriers to prosecution:** Class affinities between enforcers and executives, plus resource-intensive cases.

**Consequences for companies:** Eroded public trust and potential financial penalties.

**Reform ideas:** Mandatory reporting of executive misconduct and clawback provisions on compensation.

Humanizing this issue reveals the frustration of rank-and-file workers who witness double standards, urging a push for equitable justice.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

# GABRIEL JESUS RETURNS, ARSENAL STUN INTER

## Brazilian striker shines on return, inspires Arsenal to Champions League victory

**MILAN**

Gabriel Jesus marked his return to Arsenal's starting lineup in emphatic fashion, scoring twice to help the Gunners seal a historic 3-1 Champions League win over Inter Milan at San Siro.

Making only his third start of the season, Jesus delivered a dynamic first-half display that underlined his growing influence just a month after returning from a long injury layoff.

The Brazilian forward had been sidelined for almost a year after tearing his ACL last January and was named player of the match following his decisive contribution.

Jesus opened the scoring in the 10th minute with an instinctive finish, stretching to convert after Jurrien Timber's effort fell invitingly in the box. Inter responded eight minutes later through Petar Sucic, but Arsenal regained control when Jesus struck again in the 31st minute. Bukayo Saka's corner was flicked on by Leandro Trossard, allowing Jesus to head home from close range.

It was his first Champions League goal in more than two years, his previous strike in the competition having come against Lens in November 2023. Visibly emotional after the match, Jesus said scoring at San Siro was a dream come true, recalling how he grew up watching Serie A and imagining moments like this.

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta opted to start Jesus ahead of Viktor Gyökeres, who has struggled for consistency since his summer move from Sporting Lisbon. Gyökeres was introduced in the 75th minute and made an immediate impact, scoring Arsenal's third goal nine minutes later to seal the victory.

"This is great, we've been missing Gabby a lot," Arteta said. "It raises his confidence and the team's. Having different profiles in that position only makes us stronger."

The win ensured table-topping Arsenal qualified for the Champions League knockout stage and saw them claim seven consecutive European victories for the first time in the club's history. Still chasing a maiden Champions League title, Arteta's side also leads the Premier League by seven points and will next host Manchester United, carrying momentum from a memorable European night in Milan.

*Norwegian minnows shock Guardiola's side as City slump to embarrassing Arctic defeat*

# Man City shocked by Bodo/Glimt

**BODO**

Manchester City endured one of the most humiliating nights in their European history after suffering a stunning 3-1 defeat to Bodo/Glimt in the Champions League, as the Norwegian underdogs claimed their first-ever group-stage victory in the competition.

In freezing conditions at the Aspmyra Stadion, located just north of the Arctic Circle, Pep Guardiola's side were overwhelmed by relentless pressing and ruthless finishing from a team playing its maiden Champions League group campaign. Kasper Hogh struck twice in the first half before Jens Petter Hauge added a spectacular third after the break to leave City reeling.

Rayan Cherki briefly gave the visitors hope with a fine strike moments after Hauge's goal, but City's misery deepened when Rodri was sent off for two quick yellow cards, effectively ending any hopes of a comeback.

Bodo/Glimt, whose entire population of around 55,000 could fit inside City's Etihad Stadium, ignored the vast gulf in finances and pedigree to outplay the 2023 European champions.

Managed by Kjetil Knutsen, the Norwegian champions have been one of Europe's most compelling stories in recent years, reaching the Europa League semi-finals last season and already earning draws against Borussia Dortmund and Tottenham in this group.

City, however, failed to heed those warnings. Despite arriving early to acclimatise to the artificial pitch, Guardiola's side looked disjointed and lacked urgency, continuing a worrying run of form. The defeat followed a 2-0 Premier League loss to Manchester United and left City winless in their last four domestic games, seven points adrift of leaders Arsenal.

Defensive frailties were ruthlessly exposed, while Erling Haaland endured another frustrating night, extending his lean spell to just one goal in eight matches across competitions.

Guardiola, who had spoken of enjoying the Northern Lights before kickoff, was instead left to reflect on one of the most chastening defeats of his illustrious managerial career. City will now look to recover when they host Galatasaray in their final group-stage match on January 28, hoping to secure automatic qualification for the last 16.

# Vinícius wins over fans with 3 assists and a goal in Real Madrid's 6-1 rout of Monaco

**MADRID**

Vinícius Júnior delivered a dazzling response to his critics, recording three assists and a goal to lead Real Madrid to a resounding 6-1 Champions League victory over Monaco, turning early jeers from the Santiago Bernabéu crowd into loud applause by the final whistle.

The Brazilian forward was booed when his name was announced and again during the opening minutes, with some fans voicing frustration over his inconsistent form this season. However, as Vinícius began dictating proceedings, the mood inside the stadium shifted dramatically. His relentless running, creativity and end product proved decisive in Madrid's most emphatic European performance of the campaign.

Vinícius assisted Kylian Mbappé for Madrid's second goal in the 26th minute and set up Franco Mastantuono in the 51st. He then delivered a dangerous cross that led to an own goal by Monaco defender Thilo Kehrer before capping his night with a superb strike in the 63rd minute — his first Champions League goal of the season.

**Brazilian star silences early boos with decisive display on emotional Bernabéu night**

Notably, Vinícius did not celebrate in front of the fans. Instead, he embraced his teammates near midfield before running to the touchline to hug new coach Álvaro Arbeloa, a gesture that symbolised a fresh start after a turbulent period at the club.

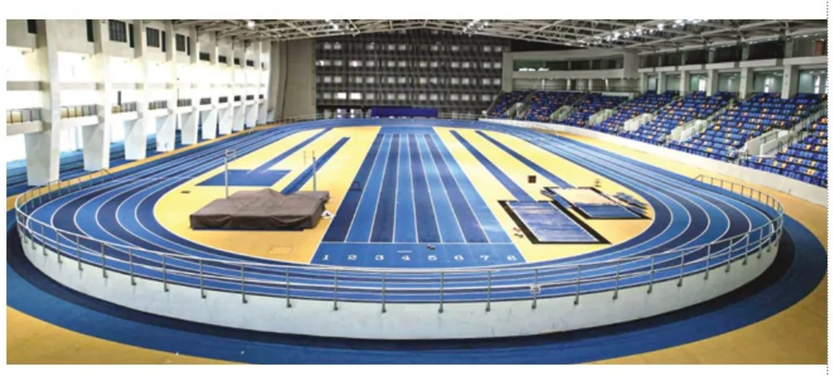
"The last few days were very tough for me," Vinícius said. "I want to be judged only for what I do on the field. When we are together with the fans, we can achieve great things."

Arbeloa praised the reconciliation, saying Vinícius "needs the Bernabéu" and that the fans "enjoyed Vini and will keep enjoying him."

Mbappé, who opened the scoring in the fifth minute and embraced Vinícius repeatedly, defended his teammate in recent days, urging supporters not to single him out. Jude Bellingham added Madrid's sixth late on, sealing a dominant display that followed recent domestic setbacks. The victory offered Real Madrid not just three points, but a sense of unity restored — led by a rejuvenated Vinícius who thrived once the atmosphere turned in his favour.

# India bids to host World Indoor 2028

**BENGALURU**



India has formally entered the race to host the World Indoor Athletics Championships in 2028, with Bhubaneswar identified as the proposed host city, Athletics Federation of India (AFI) officials confirmed.

If the bid is successful, the event will be staged at the Kalinga Indoor Athletics Stadium in Odisha's capital — the only dedicated indoor athletics facility in the country. The state-of-the-art venue has emerged as the centrepiece of India's push to establish itself as a regular host of major international athletics competitions. World Athletics officials arrived in India and are scheduled to inspect the Kalinga Indoor Athletics Stadium. The visit is a key step in the bidding process, with the governing body assessing infrastructure, technical readiness and overall hosting capabilities.

India faces competition from New Zealand, which had also expressed interest in hosting the 2028 edition of the championships back in 2024. The World Indoor Athletics Championships is one of the sport's marquee events, bringing together elite athletes from across the globe and significantly boosting a host nation's profile on the international athletics calendar.

The Bhubaneswar venue is also bidding to host the Asian Indoor Championships in 2028, underlining Odisha's growing reputation as a hub for elite sport. The stadium is scheduled to stage India's first-ever Indoor National Championships in the last week of March, with a two-day competition expected to serve as a test event for future international meets. Located adjacent to the indoor arena, the multipurpose Kalinga Stadium has already built a strong track record. It is set to host a World Athletics Silver-Level Continental Tour meet in August, marking the first time India will stage a Silver-level event after successfully hosting a Bronze-level meet last year.

AFI has stepped up its efforts to bring top-tier athletics events to the country in recent years. In addition to the World Indoor bid, the federation has also pursued hosting rights for competitions such as the Asian Relays, with New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium under consideration as a venue.

The push reflects India's broader ambition to strengthen its athletics ecosystem and gain greater visibility on the global stage through consistent exposure to high-level international competition.

**NEW DELHI**

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) announced the appointment of Costa Rica's Amelia Valverde as the new head coach of the Indian senior women's football team, entrusting the experienced tactician with guiding the Blue Tigresses into a crucial phase of international competition.

Valverde, 39, has already joined the Indian camp in Antalya, Turkey, where the team is preparing for the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026, scheduled to be held in March. She will work alongside the existing coaching staff comprising Crispin Chettri, Priya PV and Mario Aguiar.

A former player, Valverde began her coaching journey in 2011 and went on to become the longest-serving head coach in the history of the Costa Rican women's national team. She led Las Ticas from 2015 to 2023, steering them to their only two FIFA Women's World Cup appearances, in 2015 and 2023. At the 2015 World Cup, Valverde made headlines as the tournament's second-youngest head coach at just 28.

Before taking over the senior side, she served as assistant coach of Costa Rica's senior and U-20 women's teams, including during the 2014 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup. Her tenure with the national team was marked by consistent success, highlighted by a gold medal at the 2017 Central American Games, silver at the 2018 Central American and Caribbean Games, and bronze at the 2019 Pan American Games. In recognition of her impact, she was named the CONCACAF Female Coach of the Year in 2016.

After stepping down from the Costa Rica job, Valverde joined Mexican club CF Monterrey in 2023 and enjoyed immediate success. She guided the side to a historic Bicampeonato in 2024, winning both the Liga MX Femenil Clausura and Apertura titles, and was later awarded the Mexican Balón de Oro for best coach.

As part of her support staff with India, goalkeeping coach Eli Ávila and strength and conditioning coach José Sánchez will also join the national team setup, strengthening the Blue Tigresses' preparations for the continental showpiece.

**AMELIA VALVERDE appointed as Indian senior women's football team coach**

# Daryl Mitchell topples Virat Kohli for top spot in ICC ODI rankings

**DUBAI**

New Zealand batter Daryl Mitchell displaced Indian superstar Virat Kohli from the top of the ICC ODI batting rankings on Wednesday following a remarkable run of form against India in the recently concluded three-match series.

With 845 rating points, Mitchell surged to No.1 in the latest rankings update, pushing Kohli (795 points) down to second place, the International Cricket Council said in a statement. The two sit comfortably ahead of the chasing pack that includes Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran, India captain Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill and Pakistan's Babar Azam.

Mitchell's rise comes on the back of a sensational series in India, where New Zealand scripted history by winning their first-ever ODI series on Indian soil, ending a 37-year wait. The 34-year-old scored 352 runs across the three matches, including two centuries, finishing as the leading run-getter of the series.

His tally is the most by a New Zealander in a three-match ODI series and the third-highest overall, behind only Babar Azam's 360 against the West Indies in 2016 and Shubman Gill's 360 against New Zealand in 2023. Mitchell also became the fourth-fastest male batter to reach nine ODI hundreds, achieving the feat in just his 54th innings.

It is the second time Mitchell has held the No.1 ranking in ODI cricket, though his previous stint at the summit lasted only three days last November before Rohit reclaimed the position. Notably, Mitchell has never been dismissed for a duck in his 54 ODI innings — the second-longest such streak in men's cricket.

Behind Mitchell and Kohli, Zadran moved up to third with 764 points, swapping places with Rohit, who slipped to fourth. Glenn Phillips was another big gainer, jumping 16 spots to 20th after his match-winning century in Indore. Michael Bracewell also climbed six places to 33rd in the ODI bowling rankings, while Rashid Khan continued to lead the bowling charts.

Mitchell's ascent underlines a late-blooming career built on consistency, resilience and a defining series that reshaped the ODI batting hierarchy.

# BCCI bags ₹ 270 crore AI sponsorship deal for IPL with Google's Gemini

**NEW DELHI**

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has secured a lucrative Rs 270 crore sponsorship deal with Google's artificial intelligence platform Gemini ahead of the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL), underlining the league's growing commercial power and global appeal.

The three-year agreement will see Gemini serve as an official AI partner of the IPL from the 2026 season. Confirming the development, a senior BCCI official told media that the partnership "reinforces the IPL's global appeal" and reflects increasing interest from technology-driven brands in Indian cricket.

Under the deal, Gemini will provide AI-powered platforms and fan engagement tools during IPL 2026 and subsequent editions covered by the contract. The association comes at a time when artificial intelligence companies are aggressively expanding their footprint in sports sponsorships, particularly in high-visibility leagues like the IPL.

Notably, Gemini's rival ChatGPT is already among the sponsors of the ongoing Women's Premier League (WPL), highlighting the competitive push by global AI leaders to tap into India's massive cricket-following audience.

The BCCI has been recalibrating its sponsorship portfolio over the past year following regulatory changes. In 2025, the Indian government banned real money gaming platforms, forcing the board to look for a new jersey sponsor after Dream11 exited. Eventually, Apollo Tyres stepped in, securing the jersey sponsorship rights in a deal worth Rs 579 crore.

The IPL, widely regarded as the world's biggest T20 league, continues to attract marquee sponsors across sectors. The Tata Group currently holds the coveted title sponsorship rights, while other partners span global manufacturing, consumer goods and technology brands.

When ChatGPT's association with the WPL was announced in November, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia had highlighted the broader significance of such partnerships.

Former Australia captain sees European league as platform to expand cricket's global footprint

# ETPL to open new frontiers for cricket in Europe: Steve Waugh

**NAGPUR**

Steve Waugh believes the European T20 Premier League (ETPL) can play a transformative role in taking cricket deeper into Europe, describing the region as the sport's "last frontier". The former Australia captain, who owns the Amsterdam Flames franchise, said his decision to invest in the league was driven by both strategic thinking and a personal desire to reconnect with the game in a meaningful way.

The inaugural ETPL marks a significant step for cricket in a region long considered underdeveloped in cricketing terms. The league will have active involvement from the cricket boards of Ireland, Scotland and the Netherlands, while its ownership group includes prominent sporting figures such as Australian hockey Olympian Jamie Dwyer, former New Zealand pacer Kyle Mills and Australia's T20 star Glenn Maxwell.

"To me, Europe is the last frontier of cricket, and that's why I'm involved," Waugh told PTI. He said the decision to join the ETPL was straightforward, adding that he has spent the last 25 years focusing on independent business ventures, including writing and publishing, rather than traditional cricket administration roles.

Waugh said the ETPL excites him because it offers a chance to break new ground. "This is a great challenge. I'm very passionate about creating a winning culture, developing players and identifying talent," he said, underlining his desire to help build sustainable systems rather than simply capitalise on the T20 boom.

While acknowledging the rise of franchise-based leagues worldwide, Waugh stressed his continued love for Test cricket. "We want to see Test cricket survive because it's still the ultimate form of the game," he said.

According to Waugh, the ETPL's strength lies in its geographic and developmental context. With more than 30 European nations playing cricket and several already featuring in T20 World Cups, he believes the league, backed by multiple boards and the ICC, has both credibility and long-term purpose.

Kyle Mills echoed those views, saying the ETPL would provide players from Ireland, Scotland and the Netherlands a valuable platform to showcase their skills and gain global exposure in a high-quality T20 competition.

# B'desh will not back down to 'coercion' in India T20 WC row

**DHAKA**

Bangladesh said it would not bow to what it described as "coercion" to play its T20 World Cup matches in India, throwing its participation in next month's tournament into doubt as the International Cricket Council (ICC) struggles to resolve the standoff.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has refused to play matches scheduled in India, citing security concerns, and has formally requested the ICC to shift its fixtures to co-host Sri Lanka. Talks between the BCB and the ICC over the weekend failed to break the deadlock.

Indian media reports suggested Bangladesh had been given a deadline to confirm participation in India or risk being excluded from the tournament. However, Bangladesh's interim government firmly rejected any such pressure.

"We have logically requested a change of venue for valid reasons," Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Nazrul told state-run BSS news agency.

**BCB insists security concerns genuine, rejects pressure amid growing uncertainty over tournament participation**

"We cannot be forced to play in India through illogical pressure or unreasonable coercion."

The T20 World Cup begins on February 7, with Bangladesh's four group matches scheduled in Kolkata and Mumbai. Uncertainty within the team is growing, with captain Litton Das admitting players are unsure whether they will feature in the tournament at all.

"From where I stand, I'm uncertain, everyone is uncertain," Litton said after a domestic match, according to Prothom Alo. "At this moment, the whole of Bangladesh is uncertain."

Sources in Colombo said Sri Lanka has not yet been approached to host Bangladesh's matches. One contingency under discussion is replacing Bangladesh with Scotland, the highest-ranked team that failed to qualify. Cricket Scotland, according to a BBC report, has not been contacted but is prepared to step in if required.

The dispute erupted earlier this month after India's cricket board ordered IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders to release Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, triggering anger in Dhaka and hardening the BCB's stance on travelling to India.

The row has unfolded against a sensitive political backdrop, with Bangladesh preparing for its first elections since the 2024 mass uprising that toppled then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Diplomatic relations between Dhaka and New Delhi have since deteriorated, adding another layer of complexity to the cricketing impasse.

# Indian Racing Festival set for historic street race debut in Goa on Feb 14–15

**PANAJI**

The Indian Racing Festival is set to make history with its first-ever street race in Goa, as Round 4 of the championship unfolds at the Manohar International Airport on February 14 and 15. The high-profile event, to be hosted by Racing Promotions Pvt. Ltd. (RPPL), was announced by Goa Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant and marks a major milestone for motorsport in the state.

After an action-packed Round 3 at the Kari Motor Speedway in Coimbatore, the championship now heads west with the title race finely poised. Goa will host a purpose-built FIA-grade street circuit spanning 2.064 km, featuring 12 challenging turns. Designed to combine technical complexity with visual appeal, the circuit promises an intense test for drivers while offering fans an immersive, first-of-its-kind racing experience in the state.

Welcoming the event, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said hosting a motorsport spectacle of this scale underlined Goa's ability to stage world-class sporting and entertainment events. He noted that the festival would boost tourism, generate opportunities for local businesses and inspire youth to explore careers in engineering, technology and motorsport-related fields.

The Indian Racing Festival is distinctive for its emphasis on inclusivity, with each team fielding four drivers — an international veteran, an emerging international racer, an Indian driver and a female driver — ensuring diversity and collaboration across nationalities and genders.

Street racing remains central to the festival's vision, building on successful events in Hyderabad and Chennai. RPPL Chairman and Managing Director Akhilesh Reddy said the Goa round represents the next frontier for Indian motorsport by bringing racing closer to fans and integrating it with urban culture.

# Alcaraz, Sabalenka, Gauff surge into Australian Open third round

**MELBOURNE**

World number one Carlos Alcaraz weathered a fierce challenge before marching into the Australian Open third round on Wednesday, with Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff also producing commanding performances to underline their title credentials at Melbourne Park.

Alcaraz overcame a barrage of power hitting from Germany's Yannick Hanfmann to claim a 7-6 (7/4), 6-3, 6-2 victory on Rod Laver Arena. The Spaniard admitted he was tested early by the 34-year-old's relentless shot-making before finding his rhythm and asserting control. "It was tougher than I thought," Alcaraz said, acknowledging Hanfmann's explosive forehands and backhands.

The 22-year-old, already a multiple Grand Slam champion, is chasing a career Grand Slam. Should he lift the Australian Open trophy, he would become the youngest man to win all four majors, surpassing compatriot Rafael Nadal.

Three-time finalist Daniil Medvedev also progressed, though not without effort. The Russian dropped the opening set against France's Quentin Halys before regrouping to win 6-7 (9/11), 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. Medvedev, runner-up in Melbourne in 2021, 2022 and 2024, said he was pleased with his composure as he attempts another title run.

In the women's draw, top seed Sabalenka briefly wobbled after racing to a 5-0 lead against Chinese qualifier Bai Zhuoxuan, but quickly regained focus to seal a 6-3, 6-1 win. The four-time major winner has dropped just nine games so far and is chasing a third Australian Open crown in four years.

Third seed Gauff was near flawless, dismissing Serbia's Olga Danilovic 6-2, 6-2 in just 78 minutes. "Near perfect," said the American, who next faces fellow American Hailey Baptiste.

Top seeds power through stern tests as Grand Slam dreams gather momentum

Elsewhere, Andrey Rublev, Tommy Paul and Francisco Cerundolo advanced, while Alexander Zverev was scheduled for an evening clash as the tournament's opening week gathered pace with home hopes also in action on centre court.

*Pakistan supports Bangladesh citing regional security concerns ahead of crucial ICC meeting*

# PCB tells ICC it backs Bangladesh's refusal to play T20 WC matches in India: Report

**KARACHI**

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has reportedly informed the International Cricket Council (ICC) that it supports Bangladesh's refusal to play its T20 World Cup matches in India, citing regional security concerns, according to a media report.

The ICC Board is scheduled to meet to take a final decision on Bangladesh's participation in the T20 World Cup, which begins on February 7. A key point on the agenda will be whether the Bangladesh team will travel to India, where all four of their group-stage matches are currently scheduled.

Bangladesh are slated to play their first three group matches in Kolkata, followed by one fixture in Mumbai. However, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), with the backing of the country's interim government, has remained firm in its refusal to send the team to India, requesting that their matches be shifted to co-hosts Sri Lanka instead.

On the eve of the ICC meeting, the PCB wrote to the global governing body stating that it supports Bangladesh's position, citing political instability and security concerns in the region. The letter was reportedly copied to all ICC Board members, according to reports.

The ICC and the BCB have held multiple rounds of discussions, including a meeting in Dhaka last weekend, but the deadlock remains unresolved. While the ICC has maintained that the tournament should proceed as scheduled, Bangladesh has insisted that it cannot guarantee the team's safety in India.

The PCB has not issued any public statement on the issue. However, board sources indicated that the Bangladesh government had approached Pakistan seeking support ahead of the ICC deliberations.

Pakistan itself is set to play all its matches in Sri Lanka under a hybrid hosting model agreed upon with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the ICC until 2027.

The current crisis involving Bangladesh began earlier this month after IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders released Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman following a directive from the BCCI citing "recent developments".

**JAKARTA**

Two-time Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu and former world number one Kidambi Srikanth progressed to the second round of their respective events at the Indonesia Masters badminton tournament on Wednesday, keeping India's singles campaign alive at the Super 500 event.

Fifth seed Sindhu showed composure in key moments to defeat Japan's Manami Suizu 22-20, 21-18 in a closely fought women's singles first-round match that lasted 53 minutes. The Indian shuttler held her nerve in both games, edging out her opponent after intense rallies to seal a straight-games victory and move a step closer to regaining her best form on the international circuit.

Srikanth, currently ranked 33rd in the world, produced one of the matches of the day, battling for one hour and 12 minutes before outlasting world number 22 Koki Watanabe of Japan 21-15, 21-23, 24-22. The Indian men's singles player survived a tense decider, saving match points before closing out the contest in a thrilling finish.

Srikanth now faces a tough challenge in the second round against fourth seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei, who defeated Ireland's Nhat Nguyen 21-14, 21-15 in his opening match.

However, the day brought mixed results for India. Kiran George exited the men's singles after a 17-21, 14-21 loss to Indonesia's Moh Zaki Ubaidillah. In women's singles, Akarshi Kashyap also bowed out in the opening round, going down 21-8, 20-22, 17-21 to Denmark's Julie Dawall Jakobsen after failing to convert a strong start.

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